



*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 O.M. Edwards  
Llanuwchllyn  
Bala  
Gwynedd  
LL23 7UB**

**Date of inspection: May 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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<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

The school serves the village of Llanuwchllyn and the surrounding agricultural area. The area is not considered to be prosperous or economically disadvantaged. About 2% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. This is considerably lower than the national average.

There are 60 full-time pupils on roll. Pupils are taught in three separate classes. About 10% of pupils are on the special education needs register. Three per cent receive support on a school action level, 3% receive support on a school action plus level and 3% have a statement of special educational needs. All pupils are of a white British background.

The school is considered to be naturally Welsh-speaking. Eighty-eight per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is the main language. Welsh is the school's main medium of education and work. Welsh is used as a teaching medium in the Foundation Phase and English is introduced gradually to children from Year 1 onwards when it is appropriate for the individual. All pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh and English from the age of seven onwards with the aim of getting pupils to be completely bilingual by the time they transfer to the secondary school at the age of 11.

The school was last inspected in May 2006. There have been some changes in staffing since that date, including one additional permanent teacher and a new headteacher who was appointed in September 2009.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol O.M. Edwards in 2011- 2012 is £3,388. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £7,732 and the minimum is £2,745. Ysgol O.M. Edwards is in 54<sup>th</sup> place out of the 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The provider's current performance is excellent because:

- pupils' achievements at seven and 11 years old, consistently compare very favourably or better than that of some pupils in similar schools over time;
- many pupils achieve very good standards in their lessons across the curriculum, including a few pupils who have elements of excellence in their work;
- all the pupils at the school are enthusiastic about their work and make good progress and, at times, excellent progress according to their ability;
- many pupils achieve high standards in Welsh, and a few achieve very high standards in Welsh and English;
- many pupils use a wide range of skills, including thinking and literacy skills, effectively in their lessons and their work across the curriculum;
- all teachers provide relevant, stimulating learning experiences that motivate and inspire pupils to learn and to take pride in their community and in the traditions of Wales and other cultures;
- there is a family, caring and welcoming ethos in which pupils feel safe and happy; and
- the support and guidance that is provided contributes substantially to pupils' wellbeing and has a very positive effect on learning.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- the headteacher's clear vision and her high expectations are promoted successfully by the whole staff, governors, parents and the community;
- the headteacher manages change very effectively in order to promote continuous sustainable improvements in learning and teaching that have a very positive impact on pupils' standards;
- governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths, the aspects to be developed further, and the way in which they help to set a clear strategic direction for the school;
- the self-evaluation arrangements are comprehensive and precise, and address aspects that need to be improved;
- the school development plan prioritises appropriately the improvements that are likely to have a further effect on pupils' standards, and the quality of teaching; and
- the school responds appropriately and in a timely manner to a number of relevant comments and advice, including national priorities, in order to ensure further improvements in pupils' standards and the educational provision.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 in key stage 2, further raise standards of oracy, reading and spelling of some small groups of pupils in English;
- R2 review whole-school planning to offer more structure and consistency in the opportunities to develop numeracy across the curriculum; and
- R3 co-operate with the local authority to improve the quality and facilities of the building.

### What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to produce a written case study, to describe the excellent practices that were identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Excellent</b>
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### Standards: Excellent

The majority of pupils start school with skills that are appropriate or higher than expected according to their age. Throughout the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils make good progress in line with their targets in each of the learning areas, and especially in their use of language, literacy and their communication skills in Welsh. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase nursery and reception class show continuous development in terms of early writing skills. Most older pupils in the Foundation Phase Years 1 and 2 can write at length, using a range of punctuation correctly, and within a suitable range of written contexts.

Across the school, nearly all pupils speak and listen well in a range of contexts. They show interest and perseverance in their work.

In key stage 2, all pupils build well on their previous learning experiences. Many show good progress in their literacy skills, and in communicating in Welsh and English, and many make very good progress. Most develop good reading skills, including a few who have excellent reading skills in Welsh and English. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils read fluently, with very good expression and understanding. They enjoy reading a range of fiction and factual books, and obtain information from a variety of appropriate sources. All pupils are completely bilingual by the time they are 11 years old.

Good progress is made by many pupils in their writing skills in both languages. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils can write prolifically and at length to a high standard, including a small number who attain excellent standards in their written work. They use their writing skills very well in their work across the curriculum for different purposes and for a wide range of audiences. The oral, reading and writing skills of a few pupils in key stage 2 are not developed as well in English in comparison with their skills in Welsh.

Pupils who have special educational needs are making very good progress against their individual targets.

It is necessary to treat results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with care as the small numbers of children in a year can affect school performance considerably from one year to the next.

Since 2007, pupils' attainments have been at the expected level at the age of seven (level 2) and at the age of 11 (level 4) have mostly been consistently higher than in the family of schools and the national figures. In comparison with the performance levels of schools with similar proportions of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals, the school's performance in key stage 1 and key stage 2 has often been among the top 25% over this period.

The percentage of pupils who achieve a higher level than expected (level 3) at the age of seven is considerably higher than the family of schools average in Welsh and a little higher in science. In mathematics, their attainment is higher than the national average, but lower than the family of schools average.

At 11 years of age, the percentage attaining a higher level than expected (level 5) has been higher than the average for schools in the family in Welsh and science over the last five years. Performance in English and mathematics has not been consistently as good.

When comparing 11-year-old pupils' performance with that of their peers in similar schools in terms of socio-economic background in Wales, the results place the school among the top 25% in Welsh, English, mathematics and science and for the core subject indicator, for the last five years at the expected level. Pupils' results are as good at the level higher than that expected, except for in English, where pupils' performance has varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% during the same period.

Throughout the school, there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys, or in the performance of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals.

### **Wellbeing: Excellent**

Standards of behaviour are high. The school has not had cause to exclude any pupils during the last three years. All pupils across the school are very polite and courteous. They show respect and care towards their peers, and work happily and very conscientiously with one another from an early age.

Nearly all pupils enjoy school, and feel that they are valued and supported appropriately. Levels of interest, enthusiasm and commitment of almost all pupils are good, and often excellent. Pupils across the school show increasing ability to plan together and express an opinion about what they are learning. This motivates them and adds to their enthusiasm.

Members of the school council and the eco council are enthusiastic, and understand that they are representing the viewpoints of other pupils in the school community. Pupils realise from an early age that they have an opinion and a voice through the school council.

By taking part and contributing to a wide range of social events and activities, pupils have a strong awareness and a deep appreciation of their area and of the local community. Older pupils excel when discussing independently and, in a mature manner, concepts concerning a variety of moral, current and historical issues.

Pupils' attendance percentage across the last three terms has been, on average, a little higher than 96%, which is higher than the average for all the schools in Wales and the family of similar schools. In the three years before 2011, an increasing improvement was seen every year in the attendance of pupils which now places the

school among the top 25% of the best schools in Wales according to socio-economic background. Punctuality is very good.

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

The school provides a wide range of stimulating and imaginative experiences for its pupils, which respond fully to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education, along with the needs of all pupils at the school

Teachers, teaching assistants and pupils plan the themes together carefully. A prominent place is given to pupils' opinion and interests when planning their learning experiences. Advantage is taken of numerous visits as well as the expertise of a large number of notable visitors to enrich learning and for pupils to take part in a wide range of community activities. For example, a science week and a mathematics week are arranged, which include a comprehensive and varied programme of additional activities to enrich learning. The numerous, stimulating visits are a means of stimulating interest and enjoyment, which helps the majority of pupils to attain very high standards.

Detailed attention is given to literacy, creativity, problem-solving and thinking skills across the curriculum. Specific arrangements are in hand to review whole-school planning, and to offer more structure and consistency to the opportunities for developing numeracy across the curriculum. In general, plans across the school support the development of proficiency in listening, oral, reading and writing skills effectively for most pupils in both languages.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship in the school is very good. Pupils are very aware of the importance of respecting and looking after the environment. Very good opportunities are given to pupils to develop their awareness and expand their knowledge of other parts of the world and other cultures, through projects with schools in Nepal and through collecting money for good causes all over the world.

Provision for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is excellent. All pupils take pride in their Welshness, their area and their heritage. Very regular and valuable experiences are provided to work with artists, literary figures and musicians from Wales. Pupils compete annually in the local eisteddfod and in the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Learning is reinforced very effectively by colourful and stimulating displays, which immerse pupils in their heritage and their history, and their school's significance in the history of Welsh-medium education.

### **Teaching: Good**

Lessons are planned in detail to ensure effective learning and teaching. Lessons include effective reviews of pupils' understanding of previous learning in order to ensure progression and continuity.

Numerous valuable opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their thinking skills, for example in lively discussions concerning a study of the history of the Olympic games. In their study of the Second World War, the stimulating teaching and probing questions from the teacher enable pupils to express their opinion and persuade others of the impact of Germany's political policies, and on the human rights of groups of people during the Second World War. This also gives innovative opportunities for pupils to appreciate and respect other cultures. In addition, these experiences foster a mature attitude among pupils towards one another and towards others.

Most pupils assess their own work and that of their peers effectively and regularly. They can explain and understand what is needed to improve their work. Teachers record useful, constructive comments at the end of most of the work in books.

Parents and carers are given good information and appropriate reports on their children's achievements and wellbeing.

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

Effective arrangements exist to support pupils' health and wellbeing. Care, support and guidance promote pupils' personal development very effectively, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to discuss moral and spiritual issues in lessons and in mass sessions such as assemblies. They are asked to reflect quietly on the messages and their appropriateness in contemporary society on issues concerning equality and diversity in the past and in the present.

The school identifies pupils who have additional learning needs early through staff discussions. The effectiveness of the arrangements for pupils who have additional learning needs is very good with excellent elements. Appropriate support is given to all pupils through the effective working partnership between teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils who have specific needs receive a programme of effective additional support, which ensures that they work to their targets in order to make progress and move forward quickly to the next stages in their learning. For example, more talented pupils are supported and given appropriate guidance so that they can excel in their work, by challenging them and leading them to use their thinking skills and creative skills constantly in order to undertake their tasks.

Appropriate use is made of the support of external specialist agencies, including the educational welfare services, medical services and emergency services.

There is a close link with parents when outlining and measuring progress against targets for improvement in the individual educational plans and guidance is shared with them on how to support their children. Parents receive good information on their children's achievement and development.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

## **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a close, welcoming community, which is very caring and creates a very inclusive ethos. Equal opportunities are given to all and everyone shows a desire to help and support one another. The school fosters responsible, mature pupils, for example through the 'Y Ffrindiau Ffeind' initiative, who are very eager to help one another and help others within the community. Pupils are prepared well for the next stages in their education and lives.

Policies, schemes and procedures are in place in order to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and promote equality and these are known to parents.

The school is on a pleasant site and it is used appropriately. The yard and school field are in good condition and they are kept tidy. The outdoor area for Foundation Phase pupils is very suitable. It is used, in addition to the wild area, very effectively by all pupils for learning activities about sustainability and the environment.

The best use is made of a building that does not meet all the needs of the current curriculum in full. For example, the school uses the small hall for joint worship, eating lunch and physical education lessons. The toilets are old, although every effort is made to keep them to a good standard. The staff room also operates as the school office and the headteacher's office. Despite these shortcomings, all staff make a very good effort to enhance it with resources and displays, which shows particular respect for the work and efforts of every pupil in addition to creating an attractive environment.

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

The headteacher's clear vision is promoted by all staff, governors, parents and the community. Under the headteacher's effective leadership, all staff work together well as a team. They show a strong commitment to ensuring further improvements and developing new learning activities and teaching methods. The headteacher sets very high expectations among all the school's staff. Change is managed very effectively in order to promote continuous and sustainable improvements in learning and teaching. As a result, children across the school benefit from imaginative and stimulating learning experiences.

Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas that need to be developed further. The school uses governors' expertise effectively to ensure a strategic direction for the school, which includes data analyses to challenge the leadership as critical friends. The governing body makes an effective contribution to the process of producing the school's self-evaluation report. They visit classes and write reports that include probing evaluations of the quality of what has been seen. They also fulfil their statutory duties in full.

The school addresses meeting a number of local and national priorities. Appropriate attention is paid to adopting and implementing principles and procedures that arise from the School Effectiveness Framework. Pupils' bilingualism skills are being

developed in an excellent way in Welsh and English. The school's literacy strategy ensures that bilingualism receives due attention, and that the Welsh language is a cornerstone to all the school's activities, and permeates the whole curriculum.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation systems have been established firmly and effectively in the school's procedures. The self-evaluation report is based on the viewpoints of all stakeholders, and it is shared appropriately with all staff and governors. It is an accurate picture of strengths and aspects that need to be developed further.

The school development plan prioritises the improvements that are needed appropriately, with a clear focus on ensuring further improvements to pupils' standards and the quality of teaching.

Working jointly with other small rural schools in the catchment area, and beyond, with schools in the family, to share expertise and ideas as professional learning communities, is a very positive part of the work of the school. The expertise and experience that are shared in the professional learning community between a cluster of small rural schools in the area are a very influential medium in order to raise standards and the quality of the educational provision further. This ensures that the school takes as much advantage as possible of very effective learning and teaching, enabling pupils to excel in their work. Appropriate plans are in hand to develop and improve further the joint provision in literacy and numeracy and to reach a better agreement on pupils' levels of work at the age of seven and 11 years.

The school has made appropriate progress in terms of addressing the recommendations made in the last inspection report.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The school's strategic partnerships with parents, the community and local organisations and businesses are a strength, and contribute very effectively to fulfilling the school's aims.

The partnership with parents is strong. The school includes parents in almost all aspects of its work, including asking them to express in writing their opinion on the appropriateness of targets set by the school for their children. Termly meetings are held for them, and the school has arranged useful sessions in order to explain curricular aspects to them.

There is a close link with the village cylch meithrin, which facilitates children's transfer to the school's reception class.

The school has close links with a number of agencies that provide specialist support for pupils who have additional learning needs. A wide range of agencies provide pupils with valuable activities and experiences, in order to enrich their awareness of the local community, and of the world beyond the school. The school provides appropriate work experience for pupils from the nearby secondary school.

There are numerous links with other primary schools, and with the secondary school in order to benefit from one another's curricular strengths. These effective links enable pupils to reach their potential and achieve high standards, and challenge the more talented pupils to excel at their work.

The school responds quickly and very appropriately to comments and advice from local authority's school improvement officers, in order to ensure further improvements in its life and work.

**Resource management: Good**

The school has an appropriate number of teachers and classroom assistants. They are deployed well in order to make the best use of their specialist teaching skills. People from the community and visitors are used very effectively to promote learning across all aspects of the curriculum.

Teachers make suitable use of their planning, preparation and assessment periods, in order to arrange lessons and assess pupils' work. Teachers and pupils make appropriate use of computers and other information and communication technology equipment.

The school's expenditure decisions link well with priorities for improvement and pupils' wellbeing. Managers ensure that the school's budget is spent in a way that supports the school's priorities. Sharing resources with partners in other small schools in the cluster is a strength.

The school gives excellent value for money because it works very effectively as a learning community, sharing its resources very well and allowing all pupils to reach their potential, including able and talented pupils.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Results of teachers' National Curriculum assessments since 2007 show that pupils' attainments at the expected level at seven years of age (level 2) and at 11 years of age (level 4) have been mostly consistently higher than the family of schools and national averages. The core subject indicator, which shows the expected level in the three core subjects for seven year old pupils, has been consistently higher than the averages for the schools in the family and the national figures, in four out of the five years since 2007.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level at the age of seven in Welsh, mathematics and science was higher than the family of schools and Wales averages. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher level than expected (level 3) at the age of seven was considerably higher than family and Wales averages in Welsh and a little higher in science. In mathematics, their attainment was higher than the national average, but lower than the family of schools average.

When comparing pupils' performance at the age of seven with that of pupils in similar schools in terms of entitlement to receive free school meals, the results have placed the school among the top 25% since 2010 in Welsh in four out of the last five years and for the last three years in mathematics and science.

In 2011, pupils' attainment at the age of 11 at the expected level in Welsh, English, mathematics and science is higher than the family of schools and national averages. Pupils' results in Welsh, mathematics and science at the higher level than expected (level 5) in 2011 were higher than the family of schools and national averages. Pupils' performance was not as good in English at the higher level than expected, where their performance since 2009 has been lower than family of schools and national averages.

When comparing pupils at the age of 11 with their peers in similar schools in terms of socio-economic background in Wales, results since 2007 have placed the school among the top 25% in Welsh, English, mathematics and science and for the core subject indicator at the expected level. Pupils' results are as good at the higher level than expected, except for in English, where pupils' performance has varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% during the same period.

Throughout the school, there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys, or in the performance of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-one responses were received to the questionnaire for parents or carers. Overall, nearly all express high levels of satisfaction with the school. The proportion of positive responses from parents in the majority of responses is considerably higher than the average of parents in other primary schools in Wales.

Parents state that their children are treated with respect, feel safe at school and that staff expect their children to work hard, and do their best. All agree that the school is led effectively, and that their children enjoy school, and that they settled well when they joined the school for the first time. All are satisfied with the behaviour of children at the school. All believe that the quality of teaching is good, and indicate that their children are making good progress. All agree that there is a good variety of activities, including trips and visits, and that the school helps their children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility.

A few parents believe that homework does not build well enough on the work their children do at school. A very few also disagree that their children receive additional appropriate support in relation to specific individual needs. Almost the same percentage disagrees with the statement that they receive enough information on their child's progress. All parents understand the school's procedure for raising a complaint, and indicate that they feel comfortable in asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirty-one key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. Most of the responses are very positive. In general, the proportion of positive responses was similar to the average for primary schools in Wales.

All pupils say that they feel safe at school, and that they know to whom to turn when they feel worried or anxious. Nearly all indicate that the school deals with any bullying effectively. Pupils indicate that they have many opportunities to keep healthy and fit. Almost all feel that they are doing well at school, that they have enough equipment, books and computers in order to do their work, and that teachers and support staff help them to understand and improve their work.

A minority of pupils state some concern about the behaviour of some other pupils at times in class, and that homework does not help them to understand and improve their work sufficiently. The responses to these two aspects are a little higher than the national average.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Jeff Jones	Reporting Inspector
Prydwen Elfed-Jones	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Eirianwen Jones	Peer Inspector
Dilys Elis-Jones	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))

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.