

EXCELLENT PRACTICE CASE STUDY

Name of School: Ysgol Morfa Nefyn	Local Authority: Gwynedd
Number and age range of pupils	33 pupils age 3-8
Date of Estyn inspection: 4-6 April 2011	
Brief contextual information about school: This small school is located in the village of Morfa Nefyn in Pen Llŷn. The pupils are taught in two classes by two full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. Approximately 13% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and two pupils have statements of additional learning needs. Furthermore, one other child has specific learning needs. At the end of Year 3 the pupils transfer to Ysgol Nefyn or Ysgol Edern. 85% of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is the main language. Welsh is the every day language of the school and the main medium of teaching and learning. 93% of the pupils are from a 'white British' ethnic background. The current headteacher has been in post for two and a half years and the assistant teacher was appointed at approximately the same time.	
Area of sector-leading practice which has been identified during inspection and which relates to a particular quality indicator: Key Question: 1 Quality indicator: 1 Aspect: Literacy standards.	

Context and background to sector-leading practice:

The way the school develops the pupils' spoken language.

Description of nature of strategy or activity identified as/or which includes sector-leading practice:

The school believes strongly in developing a high standard of language so that the children can confidently express themselves orally in a variety of situations and to serve different purposes. Very high expectations are set and the school believes that every member of staff has an important role to play in developing rich vocabulary and solid syntax. The staff are encouraged to concentrate on good questioning that challenges the children during the Foundation Phase. Examples are included of the stimulating vocabulary and purposeful questions in these areas.

Emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' social skills through empowering their oral language, for example learning how to greet each other, how to greet adults, how to react to praise etc. The school aims to ensure that every individual has the ability to sustain a conversation and to respond in an extended, confident and correct manner when talking to a member of the school's staff as well as visitors. Every member of staff pays close attention to correcting the children's everyday spoken language in the classroom, in the school's corridors, during lunchtime and on the school yard. This is done in a sensitive and supportive way on every occasion.

Children are given regular opportunities to express themselves publicly, for example when thanking a visitor to the school or when praying from the heart (improvising) during the morning assembly and when taking part in concerts and public presentations. Emphasis is placed on clear pronunciation as well as varying the voice. The school believes that the opportunity to perform not only enriches the children's spoken language but that it also increases their confidence.

Stimulating oral language to enrich the written word

Oral work forms the basis for reading and writing and writing is not rushed. Great emphasis is placed on the **writing process**.

Before starting literacy work, staff feed interesting sayings, various syntax and idioms. They believe that new and original vocabulary needs to be presented continuously in order to enrich every aspect of the children's work. Many strategies and learning methods are used to develop literacy:

- words cauldron: a cauldron is placed in the *abc* area that is full of flash cards that include suitable vocabulary for the classroom's theme;
- treasure hunt: before starting a theme the children search for new words around the classroom and the Foundation Phase's outdoor area;
- flash cards: words are introduced daily and are included in the class's morning reading activities;
- word and definition: one child holds a card that includes one of the new words, another child holds the definition of that word. The children discuss the word and match the word and the

statement to each other;

- visit: an educational visit is very important in terms of bringing these words to life. The new words need to be used regularly during the visit;
- Small World and role play: visually place the words in these areas. Encourage the children to use them on a daily basis during oral and practical activities, for example to label the 'Small World'; and
- The Day's Interesting Saying: encourage the children to repeat interesting sayings and use them in their written work.

While feeding new vocabulary, the pupils are given opportunities to use them on a daily basis in a variety of contexts that help them to use them naturally in their written work.

Writing Dialogue – an example of oral experiences leading to written work.

The school's teachers introduce many small steps before asking the children to write dialogue. Many of these small steps concentrate on developing oral language:

- the children play characters from a story or theme and the teachers encourage them to create voices, gestures and any other characteristics that are relevant to the characters;
- they will use prepared speech bubbles to play an improvised role in a 'Small Word' situation;
- a still image is a way of getting children to work practically through recreating the image, miming and creating dialogue;
- when the children have developed a clear understanding of the success criteria of dialogue, the writing process will begin;
- they will write dialogue by filling in speech bubbles as well as writing dialogue in small groups; and
- at the end of the process they will have an opportunity to read the dialogue in the Small World, a puppet show or film so that the work is given a purpose.

The process is the same in a variety of writing forms. **This practical process develops a child's literacy skills. When the child possesses a rich oral language, the writing work at the end of the process will show the same characteristics.**

What impact has this work had on provision and learners' standards?

1. The majority of the children are very proficient when they leave the school aged 8; and
2. The Welsh results are excellent in terms of reaching a higher standard than expected (level 3). Of the 20 pupils that were assessed, 16 pupils reached a higher level during the last four years.

This case study has been approved for use by Estyn.

Signature: Angharad Reed

Name: Angharad Reed

Position: Interim Assistant Director