



*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 Bryn Garth  
Ffynnongroyw  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 9JA**

**Date of inspection: October 2011**

**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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## Context

Ysgol Bryn Garth serves the area of Penyffordd and Ffynnongroyw in rural Flintshire. Most pupils reside locally with a few pupils coming from the surrounding area. This is a designated 'Communities First' area. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and the school describes the area it serves as relatively disadvantaged. Currently, around 23% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is above local and national averages and is rising.

There are currently 79 full-time and 13 part-time pupils on roll organised into four classes. The school admits pupils to the nursery at the age of three. The classes are taught by two full-time and three part-time teachers. They are assisted by four full-time and one part-time learning support staff.

The school has one pupil who is "looked after" by the local authority. No pupils receive support for English as an additional language. Around 8% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. English is the predominant home language of almost all pupils.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Bryn Garth is £3,240, which compares with a maximum of £7,635 and a minimum of £2,660 for primary schools in Flintshire. The school has the 30th highest budget per pupil out of the 74 primary schools in Flintshire.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The overall judgement for the school's current performance is judged good because:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve well;
- the standard of pupils' wellbeing is high.
- the quality of most teaching is good; and
- assessment procedures are highly effective and enable pupils to receive the support they need.

### Prospects for improvement

The judgement for prospects for improvement is good because:

- the headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear direction for the school;
- there is a clear and effective link between self-evaluation and school improvement;
- the school makes very good use of a wide range of data to improve pupil performance; and
- the school has successfully addressed recommendations from the last inspection and a recent local authority audit.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 raise pupils' standards in Welsh language and in writing;

R2 plan activities that challenge more able pupils; and

R3 further develop systems of self-evaluation through the better use of first-hand evidence.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

On entry, most pupils have skills which are broadly below those normally expected of pupils of a similar age.

Whilst in Ysgol Bryn Garth, many pupils achieve well and make good progress. End of key stage results show that many pupils in the school attain more highly than pupils in similar schools, in Wales and in the local authority. Work in pupils' books confirms that, by the end of Year 6, many pupils work at the expected level and a few work at above this level.

Most pupils listen well to members of staff and to other pupils. Younger pupils speak clearly and use a wide range of vocabulary to express themselves. Many older pupils are confident speakers and communicate clearly to a variety of audiences.

Progress in reading is good. Most pupils in the Foundation Phase enjoy reading and use a wide range of effective strategies that enable them to read with appropriate fluency and understanding. By the end of Year 2 they have a sound knowledge of letter sounds and patterns. In key stage 2 many pupils read a wide range of texts with good expression. They read for increasing lengths of time. They talk readily about books and authors they like or dislike and have an appropriate understanding of characters and storyline. More able pupils can quickly skim a passage to gain its meaning. Many apply their reading skills well in different subjects. However, few pupils confidently infer information from a text or are able to independently locate and use reference books effectively to gather information.

Pupils' writing skills are good overall. Older pupils in the Foundation Phase write confidently for a wide range of purposes. Many spell simple words correctly and are starting to use punctuation accurately. By the end of key stage 2 most pupils use paragraphs and descriptive language well to write poems, stories, reports and recounts of trips and visits. They apply their skills well across the full range of subjects. Presentation and handwriting skills are weak, and a few pupils do not consistently write at length.

Most pupils use their numeracy skills well in many subjects. Their skills in information and communication technology are good but they fail to use these well enough in subjects such as science.

Pupils with additional learning needs achieve well in relation to their abilities. Most pupils who receive support with their learning progress quickly. At the end of key stage 2, although girls still slightly outperform boys at the expected level 4, boys attain better at the higher level 5.

Although most pupils are enthusiastic about learning Welsh, few Foundation Phase pupils make appropriate progress in the Welsh language and standards are

adequate. Many key stage 2 pupils do make sufficient progress. They understand basic instructions and the incidental Welsh used by staff. They use Welsh naturally to greet staff and visitors, but they do not make good use of these language patterns with their peers.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

All pupils have a good understanding of the importance of having a healthy lifestyle. They eat healthily in school and join in well with a good range of sporting activities. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they feel worried or upset. They behave well in lessons and as they move around the school.

Most pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and contribute effectively to discussions. They work well in pairs and groups, showing respect for the views of others as they share ideas. All children in the Foundation Phase are effectively involved in planning their learning activities but key stage 2 pupils do this less well.

Pupils' personal, social and life skills are developing well. They readily take on responsibility for a range of jobs such as 'breakfast club' monitors or playground buddies.

The school council is well established. Members feel that their suggestions and decisions make a positive contribution to the life of the school such as the development of the school adventure playground and organising charitable events within school. Many pupils are involved in community activities, such as visits to the local church and singing in the village.

Pupil attendance at 94% shows a slight fall over the past three years. However, it is consistently in the top 25% of that for similar schools. Overall punctuality is good.

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

Learning experiences meet the needs of most pupils effectively. Teachers plan a broad and balanced curriculum, based on a range of interesting topics, that interests most pupils. Foundation Phase experiences prepare pupils well for the move to key stage 2.

Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough. Generally, the school develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively but pupils have too few chances to use information and communication technology in other subjects.

The school gives good opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world through, for example, French language sessions and writing to schools at home and abroad. The newly set-up 'School in the Woods' and outdoor classroom has helped improve pupils' understanding of the environment. The school community works well together to recycle and save energy.

The school provides a good range of out of school sporting, musical and cultural activities. Educational visits, for example to Erddig and Colwyn Bay Mountain Zoo, and special events such as Filmfest and Dancefest enrich pupils' learning experiences.

The school promotes Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig suitably but planning for Welsh Language does not always allow pupils to make enough progress, especially in the Foundation Phase.

### **Teaching: Good**

Overall, teaching is good. Teachers generally plan well especially to meet the needs of less able pupils. Most lessons have good pace and staff use a range of successful teaching and learning strategies, especially the use of positive praise and encouragement, to engage pupils. A strong feature of teaching is the very effective use of support staff that results in improved outcomes for pupils.

Where teaching has shortcomings, teachers do not plan well enough to meet the needs of more able pupils.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give pupils detailed, clear and supportive written and oral feedback. This helps pupils to know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The school tracks pupils' progress well and uses the results effectively to identify pupils in need of additional support. The school accurately assesses how well pupils attain at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

Reports to parents/carers are informative and encourage parents and pupils to comment on progress.

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

Staff encourage all pupils to take an active part in the life of the school. There are effective arrangements to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through, for example, achievement assemblies, certificates and golden time. These contribute well to the good standards of pupils' wellbeing.

The school works successfully with specialist services such as police, health and social services, and this helps pupils to achieve well. The high standards of pupils' behaviour and the strong relationships between staff and pupils help create a positive ethos of respect within the school.

The school provides high quality support for pupils with additional learning needs that helps them to achieve well. Effective assessment procedures enable staff to diagnose pupils' difficulties at an early stage. Staff regularly review pupils' progress and up-date pupils' individual educational plans. They keep parents well informed and fully involved in their child's progress.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

## **Learning environment: Good**

Ysgol Bryn Garth is a happy, caring and fully inclusive school that values all pupils. The school offers a safe and welcoming environment. There are very good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils with disabilities do not receive less favourable treatment. Pupils' achievements are praised and celebrated.

Accommodation is spacious. Classrooms and outdoor areas promote successful learning. Good use is made of a wide range of resources that meet pupils' needs well. The building is well cared for.

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

The newly appointed head teacher provides effective leadership. She has a clear vision, which she communicates well to staff, parents and pupils. In a relatively short period of time, she has developed a strong sense of teamwork where staff and governors share a common sense of purpose and direction. This reflects well in the very positive ethos throughout the school.

The headteacher has set-up highly effective procedures and practices to develop school improvement based on a rigorous analysis of data. Regular staff meetings provide worthwhile opportunities for all staff to discuss progress and to think about and share good practice.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. They are well informed about pupils' performance and how the school is developing. However, their role in monitoring provision and in challenging the school is less well developed.

The school responds positively to local and national priorities. It has successfully introduced the Foundation Phase. The School Effectiveness Framework is a developing feature within the school's work.

## **Improving quality: Good**

Leaders and managers have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The process increasingly involves all staff in discussing outcomes and their own performance.

Self-evaluation draws on a sound range of information. Pupil performance data is carefully analysed to identify how well pupils achieve. The school seeks the views of pupils, parents/carers and the local authority and acts on this information appropriately. Consequently, the school knows itself well in the majority of its work. It is very clear about how well pupils perform but is less sure about issues of teaching and management.

Priorities from self-evaluation link clearly to the school improvement plan. The school sets itself challenging targets for improvement. Plans set out sound strategies for improvements, many of which focus clearly on the impact on pupil standards.

Arrangements to monitor the plan are not always based well enough on first-hand evidence.

Teachers work together well and increasingly share their expertise and knowledge. Staff are involved in working with other schools on specific issues of school improvement. These links are having a good impact on the quality of teaching and learning at the school such as in improving pupils' standards of reading.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Partnership activities make a strong contribution to widening the range of choices for pupils. This has produced significant benefits in terms of improved standards and wellbeing for many pupils. For instance, the recent 'Family Learning' program has been particularly successful in helping parents to support their children's learning and enabling these pupils to improve their work.

The school has strong links with the 'Busy Bees' pre-school provision, based on site. This helps pupils to settle quickly in Ysgol Bryn Garth and make good progress in the Foundation Phase. Good links with secondary schools ensure that older pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education. The school works well with other primary schools in the area to enrich pupils' learning experiences.

There are strong links with teacher training institutions and local colleges for further education that successfully help develop staff and pupils.

The school makes effective use of local authority services for staff development and raising standards. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievements, particularly in improving their literacy skills.

### **Resource management: Good**

Leaders manage resources well. There are sufficient numbers of effectively deployed qualified teachers and support staff. Performance management arrangements for all staff are effective. Training and staff development link well to priorities and impact positively on pupils' standards. Teachers make good use of time for planning, preparation and assessment.

The school manages its finances well. Spending decisions are clearly linked to priorities for improvement. In view of the good progress made by pupils and the quality of provision and leadership, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care. One pupil's results can have a significant impact on the school's performance.

Overall results show that in 2011 the school attained more highly than the average for both Wales and the local authority.

In key stage 1 in 2011, when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, Ysgol Bryn Garth was in the lowest 25% for English and the core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level in English, mathematics and science in combination). The school was in the top 25% of similar schools for mathematics and science. Over the last four years trends show that generally the school performs well and is most often in the upper 50% of similar schools in all areas.

End of key stage 2 assessments in 2011 place Ysgol Bryn Garth in the upper 50% for English and the core subject indicator when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school was in the top 25% of similar schools for mathematics and science. Trends over the last four years show that the school performs more highly than others in most areas.

Pupils' attainment for the higher levels at both key stages fluctuates and is slightly better in key stage 1 than key stage 2. It has been around the average for similar schools for the last four years.

In both key stages Ysgol Bryn Garth compares well to its family of schools (those schools which face similar challenges). It regularly performs better than others, although there was a slight fall in performance in 2011.

Over recent years the attainment of boys has been below that of girls. The school has successfully reduced this gap in 2011. At the end of key stage 2 although girls still slightly outperform boys at the expected level 4, boys attain better at the higher level 5.

Almost all pupils in receipt of free school meals make very good progress in both key stages. Most pupils identified with additional learning needs make at least the expected progress and a few do even better. Those pupils who receive extra support for literacy achieve well. Many of these make the expected progress. Many gypsy and traveller pupils also make appropriate progress.

Scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence from classroom observations fully support these judgements.

## Appendix 2

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Pupil questionnaires**

Forty-six key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. Almost all feel safe in school, and say that the school deals well with any bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried or upset. They have very little concern about others' behaviour at break times or in class. They believe that the school teaches them how to be healthy and provides plenty of chances for regular exercise.

Almost all those asked feel they are doing well in the school and that staff help them make progress and support them if they find their work hard. They agree that they have plenty of books and resources.

A very few thought that homework did not help them improve.

#### **Parent questionnaires**

Thirty parents/carers completed the questionnaire. Overall they were very positive about Ysgol Bryn Garth. In particular, parents think that staff help their child well to settle in, teaching is good, staff expect pupils to work hard, pupils are safe in school and the school promotes healthy living styles well. Almost all thought that the school is well run. Parents also say the school organises plenty of trips and visits, and that staff are approachable and help pupils to become more mature and take on responsibility.

A very few parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour, whether staff treat pupils with respect, the quality of information about their child's progress and the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Rick Hawkley	Reporting Inspector
Rhona Edwards	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Deborah Eccles	Peer Inspector
Tamasine Croston (Headteacher)	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.

## 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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	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:

Key stage 1	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