

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF THE
SCHOOLS INSPECTIONS ACT 1996**

**Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir
Brithdir
Dolgellau
Gwynedd
LL40 2RH**

School Number : 661 / 2183

Date of Inspection: 5 – 7 February, 2002

**BY
Rolant N. Wynne
Registered Inspector : W119 / 16554
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CURRICULUM AND KEY STAGES NOMENCLATURE

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through the school was introduced in 1989. It is intended that this system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory education until the age of 18 should facilitate communication amongst schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of progression.

The term "Reception" (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) whose fifth birthday will occur during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is used for the year group of pupils whose sixth birthday will occur during the academic year and so on until Y13 - the year group whose 18th birthday will occur during the academic year:

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Age	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

Key stage (KS) 1 of the National Curriculum includes Y1 and Y2; KS2 includes Y3 to Y6; KS3 includes Y7 to Y9 and KS4 includes Y10 and Y11 (the last year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five point scale is used to represent the main opinions in the report as follows:

1. Very good: many good features, some particularly good.
2. Good: good features and no major shortcomings.
3. Satisfactory: good features that outweigh some shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

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1. CONTEXT

The schools and its priorities

Ysgol Brithdir is a rural primary school serving the village and the surrounding agricultural area. The school is located about a mile outside the village itself and three miles to the south of the market town of Dolgellau.

The school describes the area as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged, and the nature of the pupils admitted reflects this. All pupils take school meals; 2% of them are entitled to receive free school meals. Pupils reflect the full range of ability; eleven of them are included on the Special Educational Needs [SEN] register, the majority being at stage 1.

About half the pupils speak Welsh at home and half the remainder have one Welsh-speaking parent. Almost all the current pupils speak the language confidently. Welsh is the main medium of curriculum study but pupils are expected to use both Welsh and English for learning some elements of the curriculum by the end of Key Stage 2 [KS2]. Older late-arriving pupils are given the opportunity to attend a local centre for late-comers to enable them to learn Welsh.

There has been a substantial increase in the school roll over the past two or three years, from 26 to 45. During the inspection, 60% of the pupils lived outside the historical catchment area of the school. School size, the bilingual situation and the rural context were given by parents as reasons for sending their children to this school.

The current head has been in post since September 1995 – a term after the last inspection. A few weeks prior to this inspection, she began a period of maternity leave. Her teacher colleague was appointed acting head and two part-time supply teachers were employed to teach at KS2.

The building dates back to 1873 and includes two classrooms, a kitchen and an office. Fairly recently, indoor toilets, including a toilet for the handicapped, and a new foyer were added. A reasonably sized yard surrounds the building but the school has no grassed area.

School documents note the following among its main aims:

- to ensure that every pupil feels a part of a community that emphasises, in its life and work, sound moral, spiritual and humanitarian values;
- to foster respect and tolerance towards people of all backgrounds, creeds and cultures;
- to provide a broad curriculum that develops the full potential of every pupil.

The school's priorities are determined annually based on a detailed self-evaluation

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The Main Findings of the Report

- Ysgol Brithdir provides a wealth of education of high standard in a civilised and supportive ambience, despite a number of constraints owing to lack of space.
- The quality of the provision for the children under five is consistently good with some very good aspects and is likely to promote the desirable outcomes for their learning. Standards in the six areas of experience are as follows:

Language, literacy and communication skills	Good
Personal and social development	Very good
Mathematical development	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Very good
Physical development	Good
Creative development	Very good

- At KS1 and KS2, pupils' standards of achievement in the different National Curriculum [NC] subjects and religious education are as follows:

	KS1	KS2
Welsh	Good	Good
English	-	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good
Information Technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and Technology	Very good	Good
History	Very good	Good
Geography	Very good	Good
Art	Very good	Very good
Music	Very good	Very good
Physical Education	Good	Good
Religious Education	Good	Very good

- The standards achieved by pupils in their use of key skills across the curriculum are good with very good aspects in language, good in mathematics and satisfactory in information and communication technology [ICT].
- A broad and rich curriculum is provided through a specific cycle of interesting themes. Planning is very detailed and the school meets the statutory requirements for all NC subjects and religious education. The attention given to local and Welsh studies is very good, as are the arrangements for personal and social education [PSE]. Increasing use is made of English as a medium side by side with Welsh as pupils grow older.
- The standard of teaching is an obvious strength. In the lessons observed, standards were very good in 20% of them, good in 65% and satisfactory in the other 15%. The very good relationship that exists between the teachers and the pupils is a prominent feature in every lesson and promotes an atmosphere of effective learning. Questioning is also very good and leads pupils to think and share their ideas; the contribution of each individual is respected. Even so, in some lessons observed, too much time was taken with the presentation, and the requirements were not sufficiently specific and clear, especially for the youngest pupils and those of low ability.
- The quality of reporting to parents is good and the quality of assessment and recording satisfactory. The guidelines for assessment, recording and reporting to parents are detailed and there is much good practice at the school. However, the response to individual pieces of work does not provide pupils with consistent guidance on how to improve their first attempts. A start has been made on the work of gathering a portfolio in the core subjects to

identify the needs at the different levels within the NC; this resource has further potential to promote continuity and progress across the two key stages.

- The provision for pupils with SEN is good and the school conforms fully to the requirements of the Code of Practice. Suitable Individual Education Plans[IEPs] are prepared for the pupils and additional, specific support has been targeted under the successful Quality Mark Scheme.
- The school has a notable ethos. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well by the school. Pupils' care for each other is a prominent feature and their behaviour and their attitude to work is also very good in all situations.
- The school maintains very good links with parents and with the community, and with other schools and institutions. Parents and other individuals from the community contribute regularly to the work and activities of the school. Links with industry and the world of work are good.
- The school has been successful in persuading all pupils to take school dinners and the contribution of this period to the development of social skills and the family ethos is evident; the cook's contribution is central to this. However, some pupils when they have finished their dinner go out to play before the staff are free to supervise them. This is not acceptable.
- The quality of the self-evaluation is very good on the whole, the school gathering evidence on its performance from several sources including specific monitoring and questionnaires to governors and parents. The Action Plan following the June 1995 inspection has been fully implemented.
- The school is well led and managed, and governors are conscientious and most supportive of the school. The head is very devoted and energetic and provides sound leadership; she and her teacher colleague, now temporarily in charge of the school, have met regularly over recent years to exchange ideas on organisational and curriculum matters. They have high expectations and a clear vision of how the school should develop.
- The SDP is a voluminous document that outlines the intentions over a three-year rolling period; it is up-dated annually. The introduction gives a full picture of the school's aspirations, the forecasted numbers on roll and the resulting financial implications. Areas to be developed are identified, detailing the proposed methods and the main associated costs. Good use is made of in-service training and of advisory visits to support the priorities noted in the SDP. In its present form, however, the SDP is not sufficiently manageable and succinct for use as a reference document and includes far too many aims.
- The school has been carrying forward from one year to the next a sum higher than that recommended, but fairly recent decisions to designate non-contact time for the head and to employ a nursery assistant, mean that this money is efficiently used. The service of a nursery assistant has enabled the school to provide more appropriately for the children under five.
- Staff and governors are very much aware of the difficulties and constraints that arise from shortage of space, both within the building and outside. A particular effort is made to overcome these space limitations in several areas. However, the school has not undertaken a full and formal evaluation of all the implications of lack of space and of the resultant regular, unavoidable re-arrangement.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards of achievement are sound and consistent at this school.

- Standards of achievement for children under five are consistently good in all areas of learning and very good in some of them.
- At KS1, pupils' standards of achievement are very good in history, geography, music, art and design and technology. They are good in oral Welsh, Welsh reading and writing, in mathematics, science, physical education and religious education. Standards are satisfactory in IT. Some work in English is introduced at KS1 and pupils make good progress in this medium.
- Sound standards are also found at KS2 where the pupils' standards of achievement are very good in religious education, music and art. They are good in Welsh and English oracy, reading and writing, in mathematics, science, history, geography, physical education and design and technology. Standards are satisfactory in IT.
- No specific reference is made to the NC assessment statistics at the end of KS1 and KS2 since numbers in each year have been less than five. In general, however, the school's results compare very favourably with local, county and national results.

3.2 Standards achieved in the key skills

- Pupils of all ages speak fluently and at length, using Welsh or English according to the medium for the activity. Knowledge, ideas and views are clearly expressed and they ask perceptive questions.
- The standard of listening for pupils of all ages is very good, whether to a teacher presentation, television programme or a contribution from a fellow pupil.
- The reading skills of the vast majority of pupils are good and pupils of all ages are successful in gathering information from various texts and for different purposes.
- Pupils use their writing skills confidently, writing fluently and occasionally at length. They are familiar with writing in various forms from an early age. They are successful in conveying feelings very well on paper, including through poetry.
- Pupils make good use of numeracy skills across the curriculum, especially in the context of measuring work in science and design and technology.
- The standards of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. They show considerable proficiency in some contexts, but generally do not make full use of the potential of the technology in all NC areas.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

- There is complete compliance with the requirements for corporate worship and the act of worship, either as a whole school or as a class, contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to marvel and reflect in several areas of the curriculum; pupils respond to these opportunities with maturity and sensitivity.
- The school within a civilised and supportive community promotes values of very high quality, all members of staff setting a sound model of respect through their friendship and courtesy towards the pupils.
- The school has been successful in persuading all pupils to take school dinners and the contribution of this period to the development of social skills and the family ethos is evident; the cook's contribution is central to this development.
- Pupils attach great importance to ensuring care for each other and practise this in the classroom and through charitable work; they also appreciate and respect their community and its environment.
- The school promotes pupils' awareness of Welsh culture and of other cultures and creeds very well.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

The standard of pupils' behaviour and their attitude to work are very good.

- Pupils are polite to each other, their teachers and other staff at the school. They welcome visitors and respond maturely to adults.
- Appropriate policies and procedures have been established to promote behaviour and discipline. Pupils understand and appreciate the school's basic rules.
- Pupils show great interest in their work. They pay attention to teachers' instructions and work together well in situations where there is limited space.
- Parents support all school procedures and they responded positively to the home-school agreement.

- No instances of bullying, sexism or other forms of negative differentiation were seen during the inspection period. Bullying is discussed as part of the school curriculum and there are clear strategies to identify and respond to any cases should the need arise.

4.3 Attendance

Across the three terms prior to the inspection, the average pupil attendance was 96%, which is good.

- Parents are familiar with the school's expectations and send prompt explanations for absences.
- Statutory requirements for recording and presenting reports on attendance are fulfilled.
- No unauthorised absences have been recorded.
- The school has a policy and sound procedures to maintain and improve attendance levels.
- Punctuality at the beginning of the day is very good. Effective use is made of the time allocated for learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Quality of the teaching

The standard of teaching is an obvious strength. In the lessons observed, standards were very good in 20% of them, good in 65% and satisfactory in the other 15%.

- The very good relationship that exists between the teachers and the pupils is a prominent feature in every lesson and promotes an atmosphere of effective learning.
- Teachers' presentations are interesting and of good quality; their explanations are clear. They share ideas and personal experiences in a most effective and sincere manner that promotes an ambience of collaboration and joint discovery.
- Teachers' questioning is very good and leads pupils to think and share their ideas. Teachers know the pupils well; the contribution of every individual is respected.
- Good use is made of resources to promote the teaching and learning. Specific subject language and vocabulary are presented effectively by the teachers.
- In some lessons observed, too much time was taken with the presentation and the requirements were not sufficiently specific and clear, especially for the youngest pupils and those of low ability.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The quality of reporting to parents is good and the quality of assessment and recording satisfactory.

- The guidelines for assessment, recording and reporting to parents are detailed, and appropriate methods of recording and monitoring pupils' progress are used; there is much good practice at the school.
- The oral assessment that occurs through the interaction of teacher and pupil in the classroom is consistently good, the pupils receiving valuable feedback and support. Pupils are questioned regularly and appropriately to ascertain the depth of their understanding of current work, and how much of previous work they remember.
- Parents receive full, regular information on their children's progress. In the Annual Report, comments are included on all curricular areas and on personal development with the recent addition of targets for improvement.
- Regular and reliable assessments are made of pupils' achievement in all curriculum areas and these are concisely recorded. These records, however, do not always differentiate specifically enough between what has been achieved and what needs to be achieved.
- Some significant examples of pupils' work and relevant forms are kept to create an individual profile, giving a general picture of pupil progress, but opportunities are often missed to annotate comments on the pieces to make them more meaningful.
- Work is marked fairly regularly. In the best examples, the pupil is given a further activity to help his or her understanding of a piece of work or a suggestion on how to improve it. There are also examples of a more personal response to the contents or an attempt to conduct a dialogue with the pupil. However, the marking does not always reflect sufficiently the task objectives or give pupils guidance regularly enough on how to improve their first attempts.
- The school has gathered together samples of work and worksheets, especially in the core subjects, in order to create a subject portfolio of what is expected at the different levels. The portfolio is a valuable resource to determine levels, but is not used sufficiently to monitor expectations and progress within a key stage and across the school.
- Some self-assessment sheets are used, especially in the foundation subjects, which give the pupil a more active role in the assessment process, and this is good practice.

5.3 Curriculum

A broad and balanced curriculum is provided that fully meets the statutory requirements.

- The curriculum is delivered through a specific cycle of interesting themes. The planning is very detailed.
- The quality of the provision for children under five is consistently good and very good in some aspects.
- The attention given to local and Welsh studies is very good, as also are the arrangements for pupils' personal and social education [PSE].
- English is increasingly used as a medium side by side with Welsh as pupils grow older.

- Pupils are expected to read regularly at home and to learn spelling lists and tables. Additional and extended homework is occasionally set at KS2, and the majority of parents feel that this is beneficial and sufficient.
- Pupils participate regularly in educational visits and extra-curricular activities, and these experiences promote pupils' development very well.
- There is equality of opportunity in every situation and the school takes specific steps to avoid sex discrimination.
- Despite the detailed planning, there is sometimes a tendency for pupils to repeat work at the same level since the emphasis is more on content than on continuity and progress in the skills.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of support, guidance and attention given to pupils' welfare is good.

- The school provides a safe, caring and pleasant learning environment.
- All staff show care and concern for the pupils. Pupils feel safe and are confident enough to turn to their teachers for assistance.
- The school has clear procedures and appropriate policies to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety while they are under the school's care.
- The supervision at the beginning and end of the day and during play times is appropriate but this is not the case on the yard during the dinner hour.
- Staff are aware of their responsibilities and of the appropriate steps to be followed for child protection.
- The school is part of a Health Promotion scheme and school policies on sex education and equal opportunity are operated appropriately and effectively.
- Parents are full of praise for the quality of care shown for their children

5.5 Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The quality of the provision for pupils with SEN is good.

- The school conforms fully with the requirements of Code of Practice. The SEN policy is effective and offers guidance on procedures that enable the school to identify pupils deemed to have SEN at an early stage.
- Effective Individual Educational Plans and Programmes are drawn for each pupil on stage 2 and higher. These are reviewed regularly, setting definite targets. Pupils make good progress.
- All staff, including the part-time teacher and nursery assistant make a supportive input that promotes improvement.

- Specific additional support has been targeted for some pupils under the successful Quality Mark Scheme.
- Parents of pupils are consulted regularly and the close liaison between them and the school promotes progress.
- A member of the governing body has been nominated to oversee SEN. Governors' awareness of the provision is good.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and the Community, Schools and other Institutions

The quality of the information on the school provided for parents is good. The school's partnership with parents and the community, schools and other institutions is very good.

- Parents are very supportive of the school and are anxious to promote the values it has adopted. A good number of them volunteer to help the pupils by instructing them in extra-curricular activities such as the art club, 'Dragon Sports' or the Urdd and by listening to pupils reading. A number of parents do the school favours according to the need.
- The system of giving parents regular information on aspects of the life and work of the school is good. The school handbook and the governors' annual report to parents are up to date and satisfy the great majority of the statutory requirements.
- Parents are given opportunities to visit the school to discuss their children's work. An open door policy is implemented for discussion of any concerns that may arise. Parents attend curriculum meetings, concerts and services arranged by the school.
- The Friends of the School Association arranges a number of fund-raising activities. It is a valuable contribution to the school and amounts to £500 annually on average.
- Educational visits are arranged to other sites and institutions within the locality and beyond. Local ministers and priests conduct regular meetings with the pupils. Other members of the community come to the school to share their experiences and talents, including listening to pupils reading.
- The school co-operates closely with other neighbouring schools to share resources and to save on travelling costs. The link with a primary school in one of the South Wales valleys is a means of comparing two different areas. By means of letters and electronic mail, a link is maintained with a school in England. There is a good relationship between the school and the 'Ti a Fi' Circle in a neighbouring village.
- The curricular and pastoral links with the local secondary school are very good. Recently, attention has been given to English, IT and physical education. Use is made of the secondary school's resources and staff for physical education lessons.
- Pupils and students from other educational institutions come to spend periods of work experience or training at the school.
- An effective link has been established with the different LEA services.

5.7 Partnerships with industry

The school's partnership with industry is good.

- The school's policy on partnership with industry is current and relevant.
- Older pupils have had the experience of running an enterprise and business company by going through the process of planning, pricing, producing and selling Christmas cards and through arranging games for the Friends of the School annual barbecue.
- Through visits to businesses, industries and local public bodies, pupils become aware of the variety of work that exists within their area.
- Financial assistance has been given by the Prince's Trust to improve the school environment.
- To date, no advantage has been taken of the Wales Learning and Teaching schemes to place teachers for a short period in commerce or industry.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is very good on the whole.

- Specific guidelines have been drawn up by the school to develop its self-evaluation programme. There is a close link between the SDP and the self-evaluation arrangement.
- Annually, the school analyses its results in the SATs and other tests in order to measure progress and identify opportunities for improvement. Challenging, but attainable, targets are set, based on the school's knowledge of pupils' ability.
- The head and governors have complied and distributed a questionnaire to parents seeking their opinion on different aspects of the work and life of the school and have responded to the findings. The governors completed a similar questionnaire.
- Members of the governing body come to school regularly to experience its working. They use an *aide-memoire* to help them to report back to the full body.
- The school operates a specific programme for monitoring the different curriculum areas in turn. The findings are recorded, identifying the further steps to be taken to maintain and improve standards.
- As part of the annual updating of the SDP, a detailed evaluation is carried out of the school's position and of the effectiveness of the previous year's decisions and developments. The documentation produced is copious and as a result the school sometimes loses sight of the main priorities.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

The quality of the leadership is good.

- The head is very devoted and energetic and provides sound leadership; she and her teacher colleague, now temporarily in charge of the school, have been meeting regularly over recent years to exchange ideas on organisation and curriculum matters. They have high expectations and a clear vision of how the school should develop.
- The school is well managed from day to day with a definite organisation to try to cope with the lack of space.
- Governors play a prominent role in the life and work of the school, as individuals and as a full body. They receive detailed information from the head on the work and organisation of the school, and they consider different options closely before making a decision.
- The SDP is a substantial document that outlines the intentions over a three-year rolling period; it is up-dated annually. The introduction gives a full picture of the school's aspirations, the forecasted numbers on roll and the resulting financial implications. Areas to be developed are identified, detailing the proposed methods and the main associated costs. Good use is made of in-service training and of advisory visits to support the priorities noted in the SDP. In its present form, however, the SDP is not sufficiently manageable and succinct for use as a reference document and includes far too many goals.
- The school has been carrying over a sum higher than that recommended from one year to the next, but fairly recent decisions to allocate non-contact time for the head and to employ a nursery assistant mean that this money is efficiently used. The services of a nursery assistant have enabled the school to provide more appropriately for the children under five.
- In the financial audit of January 1999, it was found that most areas are well managed and the school has responded promptly to the recommendations of the report.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and teaching resources

Staffing

- The two full-time permanent staff are experienced and effective teachers.
- Although they have similar initial qualifications, they have followed a number of courses, including some extended courses, to develop proficiency in other areas of the curriculum. They are currently engaged in developing their IT skills under the New Opportunities Fund scheme.
- Until recently, the school has employed two part-time teachers, using their specialisms to enhance the curriculum; this has been an effective arrangement. This gave the head some deserved non-contact time to undertake management and administrative work.
- Arising from the head's maternity leave, two different teachers are employed part-time to teach KS2 pupils and to provide a special education input. This arrangement is also successful.

- Employing a nursery assistant from the beginning of the current school year has enabled the school to provide more appropriately for the children under five. This has been a very effective use of the previous under-spend.
- The staff, in turn, help the cook during the dinner period, but this means that some pupils, after finishing their meal, go out to play before the staff are free to supervise them. This is not acceptable.

Building and Classrooms

- Staff and governors are very much aware of the difficulties and constraints that arise from shortage of space both within the building and outside.
- Very good use is made of every nook and cranny and a special effort is made to overcome the space limitations in several areas of the curriculum and especially in physical education.
- The need to re-arrange the classrooms for dinner takes time, but the collaboration between staff and pupils during this period is good.
- The recent extension to provide inside toilets matches the original building well and includes a toilet for the disabled. On the whole, the building is in a good condition and kept clean and tidy.
- On occasion during the inspection, sections of the building, and the KS1 and under-fives classroom most specifically, were too cold.
- The school has not undertaken a full and formal evaluation of the full implications of lack of space and the resultant regular, unavoidable re-arrangement.
- Recently, a shed was bought to store large equipment and games equipment; this is a valuable additional resource.

Learning resources

- In general, the number and quality of the resources are good.
- Resources are well arranged within a confined space and pupils fetch and use them without prompting.
- The school is aware of its resource needs and prioritises accordingly within the SDP.
- Pupils' work is displayed effectively in the classrooms and pupils turn to the display regularly when referring to work they have done.
- Advantage has been taken of the talents of parents and others from the community to make pictures, a bird table and flower boxes to enhance the learning environment.

- The school has seven computers; the majority of them have been recently acquired. It is not always easy for KS2 pupils to turn to them owing to the shortage of space within the classroom.
- The school is connected to the Internet and KS2 pupils are able to extract information from it very easily. There is a varied provision of compact discs (CD-Rom) to reinforce the learning.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Standards achieved by pupils

Provision for the under fives

The educational provision for children under five is appropriate and likely to promote the desirable outcomes for their learning. Children's standards of achievement are consistently good across the six areas of experience and very good in some aspects.

Good features

- Children make good progress in their language, literacy and communication skills. They listen intently during whole-class sessions. The great majority develop their vocabulary with increasing fluency in Welsh and English and they talk enthusiastically about their experiences. They show an interest in books and a recognition of letters and word patterns. They can over-write a word with some individuals reading and writing words and phrases without assistance.
- The children make very good progress in their personal and social development. They establish an effective relationship with other children and adults. They can concentrate and persevere in their tasks and they are enthusiastic learners. They benefit from sharing a classroom with older pupils.
- The children's mathematical skills develop well. They can name numbers up to ten and beyond confidently and they are beginning to correspond number, symbol and sound. They have a good understanding of differences in shape, size and colour.
- The children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They talk with understanding about life in their community. They are beginning to understand the differences between life in the countryside and in the town. They can discuss and record their comments by creating simple maps of the journey of their favourite toy.
- The standard of the children's physical development is good. They move confidently with increasing control and co-ordination, in the classroom and outside. They use small and large equipment with growing control and confidence. They can handle small equipment such as pencils and paint brushes for appropriate purposes, with increasing control.

- The children's creative development is very good. They respond to rhythm in music and they create music effectively with a variety of instruments and with their voices. They can select colour and medium to create representative images of high standard. They observe and express appreciation of the work of others with confidence.

Weaknesses

There are no significant weaknesses.

Welsh

The standard in talking and listening, and in reading, is good; standards in writing are also good with some very good aspects.

Good features

- Pupils of all ages talk confidently and effusively in both formal and informal contexts; they succeed in expressing their ideas clearly and are ready to express an opinion or ask a question. The quality of language is good on the whole.
- Pupils make steady progress in their reading skills. By the end of KS1, the majority of pupils read familiar texts well.
- The great majority of KS2 pupils read with meaning and fluency, varying their voice very effectively when they read a dialogue or descriptive texts dramatically. A small group who read more laboriously strive to understand the content.
- Pupils of all ages succeed in making appropriate use of reference books and dictionaries, using skills such as scanning and skimming to find specific information.
- A particular feature of pupils' written work across the school is their effective use of words. This enhances their compositions and enables them to convey experiences imaginatively.
- Pupils respond well to poetry and by the end of KS2 they create very effective poems and convey very mature ideas.
- Pupils successfully vary their writing for different requirements and audiences. The great majority of pupils spell correctly, punctuate effectively, the older pupils making increasing use of paragraphing to organise their work.
- Pupils use a variety of sentence constructions that are, on the whole, Welsh; they also show an increasing awareness of mutations.
- Pupils use a useful framework to plan out their stories. They write to a fair length and, on occasion, they redraft sections under guidance.

Weaknesses

- Comparatively few pupils can discuss fiction texts and comment on the work of favourite authors.
- Pupils do not give sufficient attention to independently improving their first attempts when writing.

English

English is not formally used as a medium of teaching at KS1; however, a start is made on presenting English during this period. Sound foundations are established where pupils develop well their ability to speak and listen, read and write.

At KS2, standards are good across the language skills.

Good features

- Although English is not formally taught at KS1, pupils listen well to stories and poetry, talk with increasing confidence and clarity and write independently at an early stage.
- At KS2, pupils can communicate effectively with each other and with adults in formal class sessions.
- Pupils listen intently and they play a role and take part in drama confidently, using appropriate language.
- Pupils express an opinion and justify it effectively in discussion of aspects such as feelings.
- A good proportion of pupils read accurately, fluently and with appropriate expression. Their ability to gather information from various sources is good.
- Pupils' standards of writing for different purposes, such as Second World War diaries and poetry based on volcanoes, is good.
- They develop increasing control of register, syntax and punctuation and spelling conventions, and they respond enthusiastically during literacy sessions.
- In general, the standard of handwriting and presentation of the work is satisfactory; some present work of good appearance, but the work of others is erratic in its standard.

Weaknesses

- The choice of reading books does not always match pupils' ability.
- Pupils do not show in their work a clear enough awareness of effective re-drafting and editing strategies.

Mathematics

Standards are good at both KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding develop well across the school according to their age and ability.
- Pupils select and use measuring equipment and read and interpret numbers and scales with increasing accuracy across the school.
- KS1 pupils have a secure grasp of number bonds and patterns and use the hundred square confidently when counting in fives and tens.
- They have sound knowledge of two and three-dimensional [2D and 3D] shapes, naming familiar shapes and describing their properties.
- KS2 pupils produce work of good standard in the four rules of number, and the majority can recall key facts quickly and accurately.
- KS2 pupils can approximate totals to the nearest 10 or 100. Older pupils are aware of the equivalence of the decimal, fractional and percentage forms of a half, quarter, tenth and hundredth.
- Y3 and Y4 pupils recognise the geometrical features and properties of 2D and 3D shapes and use them to create tessellations.
- Y5 and Y6 pupils recognise the reflective symmetry and rotational symmetry of 2D shapes.
- Pupils use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary and notation in talking and writing about mathematics.

Weaknesses

- Pupils do not take full advantage of opportunities to use ICT to investigate mathematical patterns and data and to identify links.

Science

Standards are good at KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- At KS1, pupils, with support, conduct simple experiments. They predict the likely results, giving a reason for their prediction. They can measure and record accurately in prepared tables; they transpose the information into the form of block graphs fairly independently.

They can interpret similar data from previous experiments well, explaining the work and results fully.

- By KS2, pupils can explain what is meant by a fair test and conduct structured experiments and record results more independently.
- KS1 pupils can name different parts of the body and recognise the main organs. KS2 pupils understand how blood circulates in the body and the effect of exercise and rest on the rate of heartbeat.
- Y4 pupils can name and describe the function of different teeth. They can apply the knowledge to discuss the nature of different animals' teeth and how it reflects their diet. They are aware also of the importance of caring for teeth and how lack of care leads to decay.
- KS1 pupils can classify materials according to different criteria; they can describe the properties of natural materials and man-made materials. They have good knowledge of how different materials, such as paper or plastic, are manufactured.
- By the end of KS2, pupils can name and describe forces, such as air thrust and friction, and explain their effect on objects, especially when the surface or material is changed.
- At KS1, pupils can name the different parts of a plant and state the conditions required for growth. By KS2, they can explain the function of each part; they can also explain the different ways of seed dispersal and their importance.

Weaknesses

- Although pupils' knowledge of current and previous work is sound, the development across every field is not apparent enough, for example in work on electricity.
- Pupils at the upper end of KS2 are not sufficiently confident when discussing variables in investigative work and tasks are not always sufficiently challenging and open ended.

Design and Technology

Standards are very good at KS1 and good at KS2.

Good features

- Pupils at both key stages are successful in producing original designs and in making products of very good quality using an appropriate range of materials.
- Pupils develop specific skills very well through practical tasks that have a clear focus, such as creating a moving puppet to match the 'toys' theme at KS1 and containers for gas masks linked to the Second World War at KS2.
- KS1 pupils cut and join confidently and independently.

- Pupils produce effective written evaluations throughout the process.
- Pupils discuss their own work and that of others, in pairs and small groups. They develop the skill of considering the opinion of others when modifying designs and artefacts.
- At KS1 and KS2, pupils direct a programmable toy accurately and their understanding of the steering equipment develops well.

Weaknesses

- Pupils' use of a full range of ICT skills for investigating, data handling and modelling is not sufficiently apparent.

Information Technology

Standards are satisfactory at KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Skills in handling the keyboard, the mouse and the cursor develop satisfactorily across the school, according to pupils' age and ability.
- KS1 pupils process words unaided to a satisfactory standard and produce colourful pictures to link with a specific theme.
- With assistance, they produce graphs based on cross-curricular work such as the magnet and paper clips experiment.
- KS2 pupils achieve good standards in communicating information by producing information leaflets and poetry associated with the work on volcanoes and feelings.
- Throughout KS2, good use is made of CD-Rom packages to gather information for thematic work and to produce musical compositions.
- KS2 pupils develop their use of control technology satisfactorily.

Weaknesses

- Pupils do not use the full advantages of ICT across the curriculum.
- There is little evidence of developing pupils' skills and confidence in data-handling and processing.

History

Standards are very good at KS1 and good at KS2.

Good features

- A prominent feature of the work in history at both key stages is pupils' ability to use their knowledge of historical contexts to identify themselves with characters from the period in both imaginary and factual mode.
- Pupils of every age can refer in detail to current work and work from previous terms, showing great interest and curiosity. They can also talk about historical events and characters in terms of cause and effect.
- KS1 pupils can describe fully the differences between artefacts from different periods and those of today. For example, when discussing toys, they mention the change in the toy's materials, its colour and the mechanisms within it.
- KS2 pupils are very familiar with carrying out work based on documentation and artefacts and are successful in interpreting them well, giving valid reasons for their observations and conclusions.
- KS2 pupils ask sensible questions on the past and are aware of the sort of sources that could provide information to answer these questions. They manage to gather and present information on the past in different ways. Their knowledge of local history and of events in Welsh history is substantial.
- At KS2, the great majority of older pupils are able to differentiate clearly between a factual record and more imaginative interpretations of past events, such as the Rebecca riots, expressing an opinion on the validity of the information.
- Pupils' understanding of chronology within a period and across periods develops satisfactorily

Weaknesses

There are no significant weaknesses.

Geography

Standards are very good at KS1 and good at KS2.

Good features

- Pupils of all ages discuss current and previous work with interest, using correct terminology and revealing substantial factual knowledge.
- KS1 pupils are very familiar with drawing simple maps, such as those to record their journey around the village. They can read simple maps confidently, using number and letter co-ordinates. They are able to refer to the local area and to some of the main countries of the world on published maps.
- At KS2, pupils draw more detailed maps and are able to read standard maps, referring to the key and interpreting the landscape according to the contour patterns.
- Pupils' knowledge of the geographical features of their locality is good.

- KS1 pupils are successful in using photographs to compare two places and record the differences accurately. By KS2, they are able to describe the differences between areas in greater detail and offer a reason for these. When comparing a rural and urban area, they are able to identify the advantages and disadvantages of living in each from several standpoints, including the level of services available.
- KS2 pupils' knowledge of physical geography is good. They can discuss river erosion in detail, referring to some of the main rivers of the world. They have also been gathering much information from the Web on famous volcanoes, identifying themselves with the problems such eruptions cause to the inhabitants of some countries these days.
- Pupils' understanding of the effect of weather and landscape on people's environment and lives develops satisfactorily across KS2.

Weaknesses

There are no significant weaknesses.

Art

Standards are very good at KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- At KS1, pupils show a mature understanding of the visual language – line, tone, colour, pattern, texture, shape and form, and space.
- AT KS1, pupils recognise and describe the likeness and differences between their own work and that of others, including Welsh artists such as Gwen and Augustus John.
- They use clay artistically to create their own faces as part of portrait work.
- At KS2, pupils draw well using a combination of different media.
- KS2 pupils experiment confidently with colour, producing most effective paintings that reflect the study of Picasso's blue period.
- They select and record on the basis of their observations in order to investigate the local environment and they produce work of high standard, such as rough and smooth textures related to the 'Homes' theme.
- At both key stages, pupils use sketchbooks effectively to record information, and to revise and modify their work.
- Pupils develop good skills in solving problems related to art and design.

Weaknesses

There are no significant weaknesses.

Music

Standards are very good at KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- Pupils of all ages remember well the words to a wide variety of songs and hymns and they enjoy singing them.
- At both key stages, pupils make very good progress in following sol-fa notation.
- KS1 and KS2 pupils have numerous opportunities to listen to a wide variety of music, including music by Welsh composers. They can discuss these pieces with understanding and maturity.
- Pupils at both key stages show very good ability to interpret graphic scores, accompanying and performing on tuned and untuned instruments of their own choice.
- KS1 and KS2 pupils have a very good understanding of subject terminology and vocabulary, according to their age and ability.
- At both key stages, pupils develop and practise co-operative skills in preparing group compositions and performances.
- KS2 pupils use the computer to create compositions of very good standard.

Weaknesses

There are no significant weaknesses.

Physical Education

Records show that the school is taking definite and commendable steps to offer a rich programme of activities despite the space constraints both within and outside the building. One games lesson was observed at each key stage and based on these lessons and the documentary evidence, standards were deemed to be good at KS1 and KS2.

Good features

- At the beginning of lessons, all pupils warm up appropriately and are able to explain the importance of adopting good practice and an awareness of safety requirements.
- Within the lessons, KS1 and KS2 pupils show good progress in the skills of kicking, throwing, catching and bouncing a ball.
- During the lesson, pupils show great interest and work together well in pairs or threes.
- KS2 pupils play together well as a team in a game situation, moving to a space and catching and throwing effectively in order to reach the target. Some mark well.
- Following a series of gymnastics or dance lessons, KS2 pupils evaluate their work honestly, recognising successes and opportunities to improve their performance.

Weaknesses

- Pupils found it difficult to maintain the momentum throughout the lesson because the sessions continued for too long.

Religious Education

Standards are good at KS1 and very good at KS2.

Good features

- KS1 pupils can refer to a large number of Bible stories and repeat them in considerable detail.
- KS2 pupils can tell whether different Bible stories are from the Old Testament or the New Testament, explaining the difference between the two Testaments. They are also able to give the message or significance of some of the stories, such as why Saul changed his name to Paul.
- KS1 pupils can tell, with guidance, what there is to see and what happens in the local church or chapel.
- KS1 pupils show increasing understanding of how the Jewish faith affects the way the people live and how they celebrate the Shabbat Festival.
- KS2 pupils can explain a number of religious practices within the Islamic religion and the Hindu religion.
- At KS2, pupils can discuss the story and work of some of Christ's followers in several periods, appreciating their commitment. They are aware that some individuals choose to withdraw to reflect and pray.
- Pupils of all ages are familiar with composing prayers relevant to their schoolwork and lives. Pupils as young as those in Y2 can differentiate between a prayer of thanks and a prayer seeking God's help.
- When discussing the persecution of the Jews during the Second World War, KS2 pupils respond profoundly and sensitively. They express mature beliefs on tolerance and respect for the differences between people. They ask perceptive, perpetual questions.

Weaknesses

There are no significant weaknesses.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The report written following the inspection conducted during June 1995 noted the following issues as ones needing action:

- *The school needs to look again at ways of improving the efficient use of space available in both classrooms.*
- *The school needs to re-assess the use made of the strengths, interests and expertise of the teaching staff and consider ways of extending and developing their responsibilities as curriculum leaders and subject co-ordinators so as to sustain the good work and high standards already being achieved.*
- *The school needs to look at aspects of mathematics in K.S.2 thus increasing the attention given to elements such as mental work and providing experiences which extend and challenge pupils more.*
- *There is a need to look at the provision of resources for information technology and especially the hardware available so as to develop and extend the use made of information technology across the curriculum.*
- *There is a need to build on existing provision in design and technology so as to ensure better progression in terms of developing skills and concepts across K.S.1 and 2.*

A detailed Action Plan was drawn up following the last inspection and the school has taken action according to those intentions.

- Much remodelling has occurred within the building and good use is made of the space available.

- As a result of staff changes, there has been some change in the job-descriptions and staff operate in a co-ordinating role, offering guidance in their specialist areas.
- The school Numeracy Strategy has led to the giving of specific attention to mental work in mathematics and to the general raising of standards in the subject.
- The provision of hardware for IT has improved substantially over the past five years and it is used increasingly, although there is room for further use.
- Specific attention has been given to the provision in design and technology and standards have risen at both key stages.

8.2 Key issues for action

The school needs to:

- maintain and build on the sound standards and fine ethos that are obvious strengths in the work and life of the school;
- ensure that the expectations and aims of lessons are clear to all pupils, offering them more frequent guidelines on how to improve their first attempts;
- make greater use of the core subjects' portfolio as a yardstick for monitoring expectations, continuity and progress across the two key stages;
- ensure, when reviewing documentation, and the SDP specifically, that they are succinct and manageable for use, and that the expectations staff place upon themselves are reasonable in terms of work load;
- re-examine the nature of responsibilities over the dinner period in order to ensure that no pupil leaves the building before there is supervision on the yard;
- conduct a full risk-assessment to identify the needs for safeguarding further the health and safety of pupils and staff in view of the lack of space and the increase in numbers on roll.

APPENDIX

School Data

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir
School Type	Maintained by the LEA / community
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11
Address of school	Brithdir Dolgellau Gwynedd
Post code	LL40 2RH
Phone number	01341 423 035

Headteacher	Mrs Menna Wynne-Pugh
Date of appointment	September 1995
Chair of governors	Mrs Llinos Lloyd
Registered Inspector	Rolant N. Wynne
Date of inspection	5 – 7 February, 2002

B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>								
Year Group	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	9	3	9	4	3	6	8	42

<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part time	Full time equivalent
Number of teachers	2	1	2.3

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher ratio, excluding nursery and special classes	18.9 : 1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	21.8
Teacher:class ratio	1.2 : 1

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>					
	Nursery	Reception	KS1	KS2	Whole school
Spring 2001	97%	97%	96%	94.7%	95.9%
Summer 2001	99%	92%	95%	94.1%	93.7%
Autumn 2001	88.3%	92.6%	98%	98%	96.9%

Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0
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C. Results of the National Curriculum Assessments and the public examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results: 2001	Number of pupils in Y2: 4
As the number of pupils who were eligible to be assessed at the end of KS1 was lower than five, there is no need to include this information.	

National Curriculum Assessments KS2 Results: 2001	Number of pupils in Y6: 3
As the number of pupils who were eligible to be assessed at the end of KS2 was lower than five, there is no need to include this information.	

D The evidence base of the inspection

The team of three inspectors inspected the work in every class. Between them, they attended the school for the equivalent of five and a half inspector-days. During the period:

- pre-inspection meetings were held with governors, staff and parents;
- a range of documentation produced by the school, including examples of pupils' work, was examined;
- 26 lessons or sessions were observed;
- morning services were attended;

- pupils were heard reading in the two languages and they were questioned on their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum;
- school attendance registers were inspected;
- discussions were held with the head, the acting head and the rest of the school's staff;
- minutes of governors' meetings, together with the school's financial documentation, were examined;
- pupils were observed as they arrived and left the school, and during intervals;
- a pre-inspection meeting was held with 16 parents present and 25 questionnaires were returned;
- a meeting was held with governors after the inspection.

E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Name	Role	Sections of the report	Subjects (section 7)
Rolant N. Wynne	Registered Inspector	1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 8.1, 8.2, Appendix	Welsh, Science, History, Geography, Physical Education, Religious Education
Griff Charles Morris	Lay Inspector	4.2, 4.3, 5.6, 5.7	
Annette Evans	Professional Inspector	5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 6.3	Children under five, English, mathematics, Technology, Information Technology, Music, Art

The inspectors who visited the school wish to express their thanks to the governors, the staff and the pupils for their willing co-operation and their courtesy during the inspection.