

## **Report on the Quality of Secondary Education**

**in**

**Ysgol Glan-y-Môr**

**Cardiff Road  
Pwllheli  
Gwynedd  
LL53 5NU**

**Date of inspection: November 2009**

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**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales**



INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL

This inspection was part of the pilot to the framework and the new inspection arrangements which will be introduced to all schools from September 2010. The judgements and the format of the report are different from reports on other schools that continue to be inspected under the existing inspection arrangements and framework.

The inspectors provide an overall judgement on Ysgol Glan-y-Môr and on its prospects for improvement.

During each inspection, inspectors also aim to answer three key questions:

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

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>What the grade 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

Estyn's reports follow its guidance for the writing and editing of reports, which is available on the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)). The table below shows the terms that Estyn uses and a broad idea of their meaning. The table is for guidance only.

<b>Nearly all</b>	with very few exceptions
<b>Most</b>	90% or more
<b>Many</b>	70% or more
<b>A majority</b>	over 60%
<b>Half/around half</b>	close to 50%
<b>A minority</b>	below 40%
<b>Few</b>	below 20%
<b>Very few</b>	less than 10%

## Context

Ysgol Glan-y-Môr is a naturally bilingual school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The school serves the town of Pwllheli and the surrounding rural area. There are 518 pupils on the register, which is similar to the figure at the time of the previous inspection undertaken in November 2003.

Pupils come from an area that is generally neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. However, one part of the town is in an area that has been identified as a Communities First area. 12.3% of pupils in the school are registered as being entitled to receive free school meals. This figure is below the national average of approximately 15% for secondary schools. The intake of pupils represents the full range of ability. Currently, 2.4% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is below the national figure of 3%.

About 75% of the pupils come from either Welsh speaking or bilingual homes. A very small percentage of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The school's headteacher took up her post in September 2008.

Parts of the school have been refurbished and rebuilt using £4 million of the School Buildings Improvement Grant funding. To date, two of the project's three phases have been completed.

The school aims to provide the highest possible standard of education for every pupil and to guide their development to be responsible and mature individuals so that they can be full members of a bilingual society.

## Summary

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

This is a good school because:

- pupils' achievements and welfare are good; and
- provision is consistently good.

The prospects for improvement are good because of:

- the leadership and high expectations of the headteacher;
- the senior management team's good understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for improvement;
- comprehensive self-evaluation systems at both school and departmental level, and the clear link between quality control and planning; and
- a pattern of consistent improvement in results.

## Recommendations

To ensure improvement, staff and governors of Ysgol Glan-y-Môr should continue to:

- R1 improve the performance of boys in key stage 3\*;
- R2 ensure that pupils fully use their speaking skills across the subjects of the curriculum;
- R3 extend the more able pupils across the subjects of the curriculum\*;
- R4 improve levels of attendance\*;
- R5 provide opportunities for pupils to express their opinions about their learning experiences;
- R6 when marking pupils' books, provide pupils with comments on how to improve the quality of their work\*; and
- R7 ensure that every head of department observes lessons, paying attention to the standard of pupils' work\*.

\* Specific objectives relating to these aspects have been included in the school development plan for 2009–2012.

### What happens next?

Ysgol Glan-y-Môr will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

In key stage 3, and particularly in key stage 4, results against the main indicators are above the figures for Wales. There has been a clear pattern of improvement over the past three years.

In key stage 3, in 2008 and 2009, the core subject indicator (CSI)<sup>1</sup> has been in the top 25% when compared with similar schools nationally in terms of levels of free school meals. In 2009, the CSI compared favourably with the family of schools. Although there has been an improvement in English over the past three years, results continue to be below the figures for the family and the local authority (LA). In 2009, the key stage 3 results, when compared with the main indicators, show that pupils had made good progress on the basis of their performance at the end of the previous key stage.

In key stage 4, the level 2<sup>2</sup> threshold results including English or Welsh, and mathematics, compare very favourably with the figure for Wales and the family of schools over the past two years. When compared with similar schools, the 2009 results placed the school in the top 25% against all the main indicators. The 2009 results show that pupils are making very good progress based on their attainment at the end of key stage 3.

The achievements of boys at the end of key stage 3 are below the figure for Wales and compare unfavourably with other schools in the family. In key stage 4, boys achieve well. In contrast to the national trend, a higher percentage of boys than girls achieve the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh, and mathematics. Other specific groups of pupils, including pupils who receive free school meals and looked after children, make the expected progress.

Over the past three years, only a very small number of pupils left the school without at least one recognised qualification. In 2008 and 2009, about 95% of learners went on to education, training or employment. This is above the national figure.

In general, pupils make good progress in lessons by building on what they have learnt in previous lessons. They have a grasp of a range of skills to cope with the work in their lessons across the curriculum. They listen well and in many lessons they show the ability to think and reason for themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> The core subject indicator refers to the percentage of pupils who gain the expected level in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined.

<sup>2</sup> Level 2 threshold refers to gaining 5 or more GCSE A\* - C grades or equivalent qualifications in key stage 4.

Pupils have a firm grasp of speaking skills, particularly in Welsh. They use subject terms well in both English and Welsh in most subjects. They work well in pairs and in small groups. However, in a significant minority of lessons, pupils do not make full use of the oral skills that they have to deepen their understanding of the work by contributing more extendedly and spontaneously to discussions. Pupils read well in both English and Welsh. Pupils who receive additional help with their reading make good progress. In the majority of subjects, pupils write well for a range of different purposes.

Pupils show an adequate grasp of number skills to complete tasks where opportunities arise in their work across the curriculum. In some subjects, pupils use their ICT skills extensively to complete a range of tasks for different purposes. In general, the progress pupils make in using ICT skills in their work across the curriculum is adequate

The development of pupils' ability in Welsh is one of the school's strengths. There is very good progression in pupils' language skills based on their achievements at the end of key stage 2. The development of their translingual skills<sup>3</sup> between Welsh and English is an outstanding feature. In 2009, the number of pupils who sat final examinations through the medium of Welsh in subjects across the curriculum was consistently high. There is a projected further increase in the 2010 examinations. Results in Welsh as a subject in key stage 4 are high compared with similar schools.

Pupils who have no previous grasp of Welsh make rapid progress. Very small numbers sit the Welsh second language examination in key stage 4.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils feel safe in the school. They know how to keep healthy and fit and have positive attitudes to healthy eating and physical exercise. Many pupils take advantage of the opportunities to improve their fitness levels by participating in the activities that are available to them.

Pupils' attendance levels are not as good as they should be compared with similar schools with similar levels of free school meals. With the exception of 2008, over the past three years, attendance levels were lower than expected when compared with similar schools. Attendance in key stage 4 compares unfavourably with the family of schools, namely the group of schools that they resemble.

Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. Very few pupils are permanently excluded and the level of temporary exclusions is comparatively low.

The school council has contributed to decisions about recycling of materials and what is included on the school menu. A representation from the school council contributed to the process of appointing the headteacher. The school council has been successful in its application for a grant from the school fund to contribute to keeping the community clean and tidy. To date, pupils have not contributed their ideas about the quality of their learning experiences.

Pupils relate well to each other. The new Year 10 'buddy' scheme contributes well to the wellbeing of younger pupils and nurtures positive attitudes in caring for others.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Translingual' skills refer to skills associated with gathering information available in one language and using it in another.

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

The school provides a relevant and suitable curriculum. In key stage 4, the choice of options this year is already greater than the requirements of the Welsh Assembly Government's Learning and Skills Measure. The school is collaborating well with other local providers, although some of the options in the college are only currently available to a limited number of pupils. For the first time this year, the school provides the Welsh Baccalaureate course for every pupil in Year 10, although this is not compulsory.

A worthwhile initiative this year is a joint project with the youth service which provides accredited community experiences for a small number of Year 11 pupils who have become disaffected by school work. Additional effective help is provided to strengthen pupil's basic number and reading skills according to their individual requirements.

Provision for more able and talented pupils is expanding. It includes additional classes in Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor. Also, these pupils can follow additional courses in key stage 4 either through lunch-time lessons or through the video link.

The school provides a good number of various extra-curricular experiences, including sports and keep fit clubs and activities such as cookery, photography and chess.

Language departments provide very useful extensive support and guidance on developing communication skills across the curriculum. Work on promoting numeracy skills and information technology and communication skills across the curriculum has begun.

There are examples of good work in some subjects in relation to education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The provision has not been co-ordinated at a whole-school level.

Provision for the development of the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is very good. This includes ensuring progression and continuity in pupils' learning experiences in Welsh when transferring from primary schools.

**Teaching: Good**

Teachers plan lessons carefully to provide a sequence of learning activities. This ensures that pupils work productively and maintain their levels of interest and motivation throughout lessons. Most of the lessons have clear learning objectives. Teachers make good use of a range of resources to stimulate pupils' interest, including effective use of interactive white boards. The effective use of bilingual learning resources is a very good feature of the support for pupils whose grasp of Welsh is not as well-developed.

Teaching has very good features in about one in five lessons. This includes ensuring that pupils of different levels of ability are able to make very good progress during the lesson.

In the 20% of lessons where the quality of the teaching is adequate, common shortcomings include a lack of open questions to encourage pupils to reason and expand on their oral contributions. In a minority of lessons, higher ability pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

In a good number of subjects, pupils have good opportunities to self-assess their progress and to record what needs to be improved.

Errors and mistakes in pupils' books are corrected, and pupils receive supportive comments that acknowledge their efforts. An increasing number of teachers provide a detailed written analysis of formal assessment tasks. In a minority of subjects, pupils receive clear guidance in their books on what needs to be improved and how to achieve it.

There are appropriate systems in place to track pupils' progress across subjects. This has led to establishing a target group of Year 11 pupils who are underachieving.

Parents receive good information regularly about their children's progress. A minority of subject reports clearly indicate what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievements in the subject.

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

The school collaborates well with a number of various agencies to provide relevant support to pupils who require specialist and additional learning support. There are good links between the parents of pupils with special educational needs and the school. With the support of learning assistants, pupils with special educational needs are coping well with the work in mainstream classes. The school has started on a project called 'Team Around the Child' to strengthen the collaboration between local agencies in relation to vulnerable pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and systems for safeguarding children.

There is appropriate provision in place to promote pupils' health and wellbeing. The personal and social education (PSE) programme and tutorial lessons give good attention to such areas as healthy eating, sex education, drugs and cyber-bullying. The school also takes advantage of theatre in education productions.

The school gives due attention to promoting the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences. Aspects such as equality, respect for other people's beliefs and Welsh identity are promoted effectively. Matters relating to violence, racism and relationships are dealt with and discussed through PSE activities, lessons and various projects.

**Learning environment: Good**

The school promotes equality and social diversity well.

There are relevant policies and procedures in place and the school fully meets its legal obligations. The curriculum and educational programmes are accessible to all pupils, irrespective of race, gender or background.

Staffing and learning resources are good. Pupils have sufficient learning resources. The school uses its teachers and support staff effectively, with good support for teachers who are teaching in areas in which they do not have subject expertise. The building is well maintained. Substantial building work has ensured extensive improvements to the learning environment in several parts of the school.

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

The senior management team (SMT) works together well to develop appropriate systems and implement them. Managers have good knowledge about performance in areas for which they are responsible. The school has appropriate arrangements for staff performance management.

The leadership and high expectations of the new headteacher have ensured significant developments, particularly in relation to the further development of the school's managerial systems. This has led to increasing accountability amongst middle managers. A suitable structure has been produced for departmental self-evaluation reports and a specific timetable for planning. There is a clear focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. Regular meetings are held between departmental heads and their liaison member from the SMT, together with discussions on important aspects such as schemes of work, strategies to raise standards, assessment, self-evaluation or in-service training needs. Records of departmental liaison meetings do not specify implementation responsibilities by identifying targets or agreed follow-up action.

Middle managers provide useful guidance in relation to a variety of aspects. The most effective departments regularly discuss attainment and learning strategies in their departmental meetings. Their schemes of work ensure a wide range of learning experiences and provide good ideas to enable teachers to teach interesting and stimulating lessons.

The school responds well to the Welsh Assembly Government's current priorities including the establishing of partnerships with other providers, providing for Learning Pathways 14-19, ensuring effective progression between key stages 2 and 3 and the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate in key stage 4.

The governing body has developed a good understanding of the school's performance and knows the school well. Worthwhile links have been established between individual governors and departments and there is a system of regular presentations by head of department at governing body meetings. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has extensive links with its feeder primary schools. Pastoral arrangements enable pupils to settle quickly in the school and the school makes good use of information to ensure support for pupils on the basis of their individual needs. There are appropriate arrangements in place to promote curricular progression and continuity between key stages 2 and 3.

The partnership with Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor and with other schools contributes well to extending the range of subjects provided in key stage 4. The school also collaborates with the college to ensure progression at transition to post-16 education.

The good links with the careers service contribute well to ensuring destinations for pupils at 16 years of age. The school works well in partnership with local employers and other agencies in order to support pupils with behavioural or attendance problems.

Parents receive much information about the work of the school and their children's progress. Matters of concern to parents receive a prompt response.

### **Quality improvement: Good**

The school's self-evaluation systems are detailed and have been well planned on both a whole-school and departmental level. Self-evaluation reports provide a balanced and clear analysis of the school's strengths, as well as indicating specific action points for aspects that need to be improved.

In general, departmental self-evaluations lead to clear analyses of aspects for improvement. In this respect, there is innovative practice in departments such as Welsh, English and science. In some cases, there is an overemphasis on teaching methods when evaluating standards of pupils' work and the progress they make. Classroom observation is a constant feature of self-evaluation by many heads of department, but it does not occur in a few subjects.

The detailed school development plan is based on direct evidence arising from whole-school and departmental self-evaluation. It provides clear direction for school improvement activity and includes challenging but attainable quantitative targets for the next two years. There is a strong link between the school's priorities and departmental development plans. In some instances, strategies identified in development plans do not address priorities in sufficient detail. There is increasing attention in these plans to improving the quality of learning and teaching. However, the departmental analyses of performance do not pay enough attention to the comparative performance of individual pupils across subjects as a means of identifying underachievement.

Teachers have good opportunities to attend in-service training courses. There are good arrangements in place to ensure continuous professional development. This includes attending training at local consortium level.

**Resource management: Good**

The school manages its resources well. Expenditure is monitored regularly, ensuring that funding is available to meet school and departmental priorities. The school gives good attention to requirements associated with reducing teachers' workload.

The school has coped well, in difficult circumstances, during the period of extensive building work.

The school provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report:**

#### **Responses to parents' questionnaires**

A total of 147 questionnaires completed by either parents or carers were returned. Satisfaction levels among parents are high. The views of 90% or more parents were positive in relation to every aspect of the life and work of the school.

#### **Responses to learners' questionnaires**

Questionnaires were completed by 25% of pupils, chosen at random. In general, pupils' views about aspects of the life and work of the school are positive. With very few exceptions, pupils feel safe in the school and are of the opinion that school staff treat them with respect and help them when they have problems. Most pupils are of the opinion that they have good opportunities to undertake physical exercise regularly. A minority of pupils indicated that their homework did not help them to understand and improve their school work. Many pupils feel that behaviour is good and allows them to get on with their work.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from Ysgol Glan-y-Môr and from Estyn's website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge, not exceeding the cost of reproduction, may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

The Data report can be found 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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 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 National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Iolo Dafydd	Reporting Inspector
Steffan James	Team Inspector
Ray Owen	Team Inspector
Alun Morgan	Team Inspector
Wiliam Owen	Lay Inspector
Colin Rees	Peer Inspector
Menai Jones	Provider's nominee

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