

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Report on the Quality of Education in

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

School Number: 6612183

Date of Inspection: 29 January 2008

by

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Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir took place between 29/01/08 and 30/01/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Len Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **short** inspection.

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Brithdir is a small school, located on the outskirts of the village, which is some two miles from the town of Dolgellau. The school is maintained by Gwynedd Education Authority (LEA).
2. The area the school serves is agricultural and, to a certain extent, continues to be an area where Welsh is the main language. Some 63% of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as the main language. Some 70% of pupils come from the village and nearby farms, whilst the remainder of pupils come from Dolgellau and villages such as Llanfachreth, Arthog, Abergynolwyn and Rhydyman.
3. The school describes the area as one that is comparatively prosperous. Three per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure that is substantially lower than the comparative figures for Gwynedd and Wales.
4. Pupils are admitted to the school on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday and as full-time pupils in the September following their fourth birthday.
5. There is the full range of mixed abilities amongst pupils taught within both the classes in the school. Some 13% of pupils are on the additional learning needs (ALN) register, a figure that is lower than the comparative figure for Gwynedd and Wales. No pupil holds a 'statement' of ALN.
6. There were 37 pupils on roll during the period of this inspection, including six children of nursery age who attended in the afternoons only.
7. The school was last inspected in February 2002, when there were 42 pupils on roll.
8. The current headteacher has been in her post since September 1995.

The school's priorities and targets

9. The following matters were identified as priorities for development in the school development plan (SDP) for 2007-08.
 - prepare for the forthcoming Foundation Phase in key stage 1;
 - review the assessment systems;
 - monitor behaviour and follow the Webster Stratton plan;
 - adopt the 'thinking skills' strategies' within the humanities, and
 - implement aspects of the Healthy Schools through keeping fit and encouraging healthy eating.

Summary

10. Ysgol Brithdir is a small, rural school, which has outstanding aspects. One of its main features is the effort made to ensure broad and balanced experiences for its pupils, in the face of a lack of space and facilities. The community and all its stakeholders are proud of the school.
11. The school succeeds in providing a full education for the whole range of pupils that attend.
12. The school is well committed to promoting the health and fitness of its pupils. Pupils are encouraged to use the running track on the yard under the 'Dal i Fynd' strategy. Competing in a variety of inter-school games organised by the Urdd or on a catchment level is an important element in the school. Key stage 2 pupils run a daily fruit shop.

Table of grades awarded:

Key Question	Inspection Grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	Grade 1
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	Grade 2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	Grade 1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 1
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	Grade 2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	Grade 2

13. The overall quality of the educational provision for children under five years of age is appropriate for their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
14. Pupils succeed particularly well in achieving skills and gaining understanding and knowledge. They succeed outstandingly well in fulfilling some tasks at home, in preparation for dealing with them in the school. This ability to combine activities undertaken outside the classroom with curricular and social tasks within the classroom is a strong feature of their work.
15. Children under five years of age and pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are developing their key skills well, by fulfilling relevant tasks across the curriculum, such as in designing safety posters to develop literacy and information and communications technology (ICT) skills, and through discussing important dates during the Victorian era to develop numeracy.
16. Pupils' bilingual skills are highlighted as they become involved in reading experiences in both languages. They use English appropriately in some lessons from an early stage in key stage 1. In key stage 2, pupils' proficiency increases as they record aspects of work, such as scientific research and the history of Dr Barnardo, through the medium of English.
17. Results of assessments in key stage 1, in the three subjects assessed, have been outstanding over the last three years, being better than results in similar schools, in respect of the percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school

meals. In key stage 2, also, assessment results in the four subjects assessed have been very high, with English and science having been consistently in the highest quartile. Yet, the very small numbers of pupils in the cohort assessed can create misleading data.

18. Pupils understand outstandingly well what they do during lessons, succeeding in gaining a new understanding and developing ideas in accordance with the lesson objectives. The way in which they respond to the challenge of the tasks, through reasoning, discussing and collaborating, is outstanding. Pupils show motivation and initiative, and apply themselves diligently and effortlessly to their activities; they succeed in persevering outstandingly well, without demanding the attention of teachers. This is also true of the children under five years of age.
19. Their social skills are developed well. They respond appropriately in sessions of collective worship, contributing to the atmosphere of the worship. They work and behave together well, whether it is on tasks within the classes or around the school. The emphasis placed on developing their thinking skills provides them with opportunities to nurture their co-operative and social skills well. Their moral awareness is developing well as they contribute towards charities, whilst their cultural awareness is nurtured as they work alongside a prominent poet on old Welsh traditions.
20. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They succeed in developing disciplined individuals, responding to the expectations of the guidelines set. They respond in a mature way, showing respect towards people and property.
21. Attendance levels over the three whole terms prior to the inspection were 92.4%, a figure that is lower than Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) expectations. Overall, punctuality at the beginning of the school day and during the day is good.
22. Pupils display good, and sometimes outstanding creative skills, in several fields. They can create polished compositions in music lessons; a good number of key stage 2 pupils succeed in mastering musical instruments, with some displaying excellence. They show sensitivity to detail in their work in art.
23. Pupils' awareness of global citizenship is outstanding. A child of Dutch origin in reception year who came to the school last year has received a warm welcome from pupils in the school. In key stage 1, the re-creating of a Japanese house in the classroom, and the collection of dolls from around the world, enrich pupils' understanding of global citizenship in a visually outstanding way. Pupils in key stage 2 develop a good awareness of the native inhabitants of the tropical rainforests.
24. Pupils display a good awareness of equal opportunities issues, with boys and girls taking advantage of opportunities to be members of competitive teams that would normally include single sex members.

Quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

25. In the lessons observed, the grades for teaching are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
18%	64%	18%	0%	0%

26. A very good relationship exists between teachers and pupils, and this promotes the teaching and learning outstandingly well. Teachers display a good knowledge of their pupils and this enables them to respond to their needs. Teachers have a good awareness of the contents of the curriculum and their understanding of current strategies, such as developing pupils' thinking skills, is good.
27. Amongst the good and outstanding features seen in the teaching are challenging pupils to reason and think; outstanding questioning to summarise findings; opportunities for pupils to work together, without over-intervention and quiet but effective support.
28. At times, in some lessons, not enough attention is given to promoting the progress of children under five years of age, with regard to intervening in their learning whilst they are involved in their activities.
29. According to evidence in pupils' books, there is a tendency for over-use of worksheets, which limits pupils' opportunities to record at length.
30. The school's system for assessment, recording and reporting to parents is good. Teachers assess the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and highlight areas for development. Assessment is used regularly in order to inform, plan and set targets at individual pupil level. Parents are invited to school each term to discuss the progress of their children, an arrangement that is appreciated by parents. Annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements, and are of good quality.
31. Curricular planning in the school, including planning for children under five years of age, provides a co-ordinated base for meeting the learning needs of pupils and offers a broad framework on content and skills across the subjects. Planning is thorough, meeting the statutory requirements and reflecting the main aims of the school of ensuring equal access for each learner.
32. The school provides an exceptional variety of experiences of good quality for its pupils, including educational visits that correspond to the termly themes, speakers who visit, sporting opportunities, musical tuition, residential courses and opportunities to develop pupils' performing and creative skills in art and music through competitions in the Urdd eisteddfod.
33. There are outstanding provision and strategies for developing pupils' basic and key skills. This is reflected in pupils' ability to work independently and make mature decisions. Good use is made of information technology and emphasis is placed on the ability to develop investigative skills and solve problems. The provision for the promotion and development of pupils' bilingual skills is very good. There is very good provision for the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* and Welsh culture and heritage receives a prominent place in the life and work of the school.
34. The broad learning experiences promote pupils' moral, spiritual, social and cultural development outstandingly well. Pupils contribute towards charities and consider those less fortunate than themselves. Through a charitable movement, pupils regularly contribute towards improving the life of a young girl adopted in Rwanda; they correspond with her once a term. Pupils support each other and are aware of good behaviour. The spiritual element during collective worship and the personal and social education (PSE) sessions enriches their experiences and reinforces the community atmosphere within the school.

35. The depth and quality of partnerships with the school is outstanding. Outstanding support was received from the parents to the pre-inspection meeting and an extremely supportive response to the questionnaires. They are active in the school, undertake educational visits and are very supportive of the Home/School agreement. Through previous arrangement, use is made of locations such as the village hall for some activities.
36. There are very good links with the local secondary school. Due to a lack of space at the school, regular physical education lessons are arranged in the secondary school and some of the teachers there often take lessons. Transport is shared with other schools in the catchment and workshops are arranged in a number of curricular subjects. As a result, a strong social relationship exists between them. The school also benefits from being twinned with a Welsh school in South Wales.
37. Beneficial visits are arranged to locations relating to the world of work, including Mynydd Gwefru Llanberis, a veterinary centre, a farm and an art gallery. Older pupils manage their bank account and have established a company to make Christmas cards that is developing their entrepreneurial skills well. In addition, they arrange stalls for events during the year, in order to raise money.
38. Promoting education for sustainable development is in the process of being developed. Paper is recycled regularly and the school is economical in its use. Different eco themes are dealt with throughout the school each term. The school has already received the Bronze award for its efforts.
39. The quality of the care, support and guidance provided for pupils shows good features and no important shortcomings. The school is a close homely community, with the staff working conscientiously to support the pupils and encouraging them to develop independence and achieve their full potential. Parents have strong confidence in the care and guidance their children receive.
40. There are effective arrangements for welcoming new pupils to the nursery class. The school has very good links with the nursery group and non-Welsh speaking latecomers have the opportunity to attend the Language Centre and then settle in quickly at the school. There are good link arrangements with the secondary school in order to ensure continuity and a smooth transition.
41. The school provides well for pupils with ALN. Their needs are identified at an early stage and they are given good support within the classroom. Clear targets are set for them, and pupils receive sensitive and appropriate support from the teachers and assistant. Parents are consulted in full.
42. Each pupil is encouraged to take part in all activities and the school's equal opportunities policy encourages pupils of either gender to play football and netball. Boys and girls are encouraged to become involved in all activities arranged by the school. The school has a policy for the promotion of racial equality, and pupils are aware of diversity.
43. Some alterations have been made to the building, such as erecting a ramp for a wheel chair and, according to need, every effort is made to provide for pupils and visitors with physical disabilities.

Leadership and management

44. The school is led in an outstanding way by a head who is extremely conscientious and industrious. A sound management procedure exists in the school and the documents are relevant and current. As she teaches her class for a very substantial portion of the week, the cost to her with regard to energy and time is heavy.
45. Team ethos is strong in the school; there is ready support from the co-teacher, and assistant and members of the governing body to fulfil the aims and objectives of the school. The governing body is very enthusiastic about the school and is proud of its achievements and its successes.
46. The school has established a very effective monitoring procedure, in respect of timetabling for monitoring curricular subjects and managerial aspects. Much documentation has emanated from this procedure, including comprehensive reports that are evidence of the teachers' industriousness in monitoring in accordance with the planned programme.
47. The school succeeds well in seeking the views of parents and pupils on the educational provision. An appropriate questionnaire was drawn up for parents; a questionnaire was also distributed to pupils, and full responses were received on several aspects of the school's work.
48. The current SDP is a very useful and organised document. It contains a statistical overview of the school, together with a detailed appraisal of the outcomes of priorities previously achieved. Clear action plans have been drawn up for fulfilling the priorities for the current year.
49. Two full-time teachers are employed, including the head. This is sufficient for the number of pupils on roll. A classroom assistant is employed for four days a week. Her contribution in both classes is very effective. Members of staff know the pupils well and this promotes the relationship between them.
50. A supply teacher is employed for one day each week, in order to release both teachers in turn from their class responsibilities. Teachers use these periods for planning, preparation and assessment, and the headteacher is of the opinion that these are essential periods. The inspection team is of the opinion that the head should, in light of constant managerial and pastoral demands, receive and implement that which is due to her in respect of further non-contact time.
51. The school is located in a building that is extremely lacking with regard to space within and the facilities outside. Even though the building, including all nooks and crannies, is used in an effective way, lack of space and rooms for 'occasional' use are a feature of the school. A homely ethos and organisation are obvious features, and the walls of the classroom are used constantly to display pupils' work tastefully. The building is kept clean.
52. There is a sufficient supply of resources in the school for the areas of the curriculum and pupils have ease of access to them during lessons.
53. The school made good progress in relation to the key issues identified in the 2002 Inspection. Detailed comments on each of the key issues were presented, noting the work which emanated from the post-inspection action plan.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the school needs to:

- R1 continue to strive to maintain and build on the sound standards;
- R2 ensure that each cohort of pupils in the under-fives and key stage 1 class receive constant attention and support during lessons;
- R3 reduce the dependence on worksheets for recording, and
- R4 strive to ensure more non-contact time for the head.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 54. The findings of the inspection team differ to the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. It is the opinion of the inspection team that there are a number of outstanding aspects to pupils achievements, in particular in the way they link the work they do at home with lesson tasks in school, the way they nurture their learning skills in lessons and the way the school's results, over a number of years, excel on the results of similar schools.
- 55. Pupils succeed particularly well in achieving skills, to gain understanding and knowledge. There is an element of excellence in the way in which they glean information from a variety of sources and succeed in adapting the information in order to create an information-document to inform others.
- 56. They succeed outstandingly in fulfilling some tasks at home, both investigative and creative, in order to subsequently deal with them in the school. This ability to combine activities undertaken outside the classroom with curricular and social tasks is a strength in their work.
- 57. Pupils are aware of the personal targets set for them, particularly in the field of literacy, and succeed well in attaining them.
- 58. The overall quality of the educational provision for children under five years of age is appropriate for their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.
- 59. The key skills of children under five years of age are developing well. They develop literacy skills through collecting pictures or objects relating to the 'letter of the week'; they develop language well through role-play and by learning in a practical way about fruit. They develop numeracy skills whilst learning about division in cutting fruit into specific sections and in locating places with references. Their ICT confidence and skills develop as they use an art package to practice the letter of the week and in drawing a picture of themselves.

60. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are developing their key skills well, by fulfilling relevant tasks across the curriculum. They develop literacy skills by designing safety posters and in recording a moral in a parable or writing from the perspective of a person in the Victorian era. They develop numeracy skills by discussing significant dates during the Victorian era and in studying the time line for the period. Their ICT skills develop as they research the Internet for information on specific charities or information on tropical rainforests. They also use the LOGO program to create skilful patterns.
61. Pupils' bilingual skills are highlighted as they become involved in reading experiences in both languages. They use English appropriately in some lessons from an early stage in key stage 1. In key stage 2, pupils' proficiency increases as they record aspects of work, such as scientific research and the history of Dr Barnardo, through the medium of English.
62. In the assessments at the end of key stage 1 in 2007, the school's results were 100% across the three subjects assessed, namely Welsh, mathematics and science. As the number of pupils assessed is extremely low, it is unfair to make comparisons that could be misleading.
63. In the assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2007, the school's results were very sound. Pupils achieved results of 100% in English, and in mathematics and science and 66.7% in Welsh. The very small numbers in the cohort make comparisons that could prove to be misleading.
64. Results of assessments in key stage 1 have been outstanding over the last three years, being better than results in similar schools, in respect of the percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals. The core subject indicator (CSI) – namely the measure of success in mathematics, science and one of the two languages – places the school in the highest quartile over the three years.
65. In key stage 2, also, assessment results have been very high, with English and science having been consistently in the highest quartile. Whilst the school's CSI has been in the highest quartile in 2005 and 2007, it fell to the third quartile in 2006. Again, the very small numbers of pupils in the cohort assessed can create misleading data.
66. The high quality of the school's results, in both key stages, is testimony to the fact that there is no difference at all between the achievements of boys and girls.
67. Pupils understand outstandingly well what they do during lessons, succeeding in gaining a new understanding and developing ideas in accordance with the lesson objectives. The way in which they respond to the challenge of the tasks, and that through reasoning, discussing and collaborating, is outstanding. They know how to improve and develop aspects of their work. They develop well in their maturity as learners.
68. Pupils show motivation and initiative, and apply themselves diligently and effortlessly to their activities; they succeed in persevering outstandingly well, without demanding the attention of teachers. This is also true of the children under five years of age.
69. Pupils develop their social skills well. They respond appropriately in sessions of collective worship, contributing to the atmosphere of the worship. They work and

behave together well, whether it is on tasks within the classes or around the school. The emphasis placed on developing their thinking skills provides them with opportunities to nurture their co-operative and social skills well. They willingly contribute to charities and sponsor the education and health of a girl in Rwanda. Their awareness of Welsh culture is developing well as they involve themselves in projects on traditions such as *Y Fari Lwyd*, *Hel Calennig* a *Chanu Plygain*.

70. Pupils display good, and sometimes outstanding creative skills, in several fields. They can create polished compositions in music lessons; a good number of key stage 2 pupils succeed in mastering musical instruments, with some displaying excellence. They show sensitivity to detail in their sketching work.
71. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They succeed in developing disciplined individuals, responding to the expectations of the guidelines set. They respond in a mature way, showing respect towards people and property.
72. Attendance levels over the three whole terms prior to the inspection were 92.4%, a figure that is lower than WAG expectations. Figures for the autumn term were impaired by the consistent absence of two pupils from the same family. Overall, punctuality at the beginning of the school day and during the day is good.
73. Pupils display a good awareness of equal opportunities issues, with boys and girls taking advantage of opportunities to be members of competitive teams that would normally include single sex members.
74. They contribute well to community activities in the village, such as Christmas shows and concerts in the village hall and church. Through walking through the village as part of their school work, pupils in key stage 1 know its main features well.
75. As a result of visits by people from the world of work, such as the police liaison officer, a graphic designer and artists, pupils gain a good understanding of the world of work. In addition, they visit specific places, such as a farm and veterinary centre in order to deepen their awareness of the workplace.
76. They develop entrepreneurial skills appropriately by running the daily fruit shop; through listening to a presentation by an officer from the bank, they learn how to keep accounts correctly. They annually produce Christmas cards and decorations that they sell to parents and acquaintances.
77. Pupils' awareness of global citizenship is outstanding. The school sponsors the education and health of a child in Rwanda. A child of Dutch origin in reception year who came to the school last year has received a warm welcome from pupils in the school. In key stage 1, the re-creating of a Japanese house in the classroom, and the collection of dolls from around the world, enriching pupils' understanding of global citizenship in a visual way, is outstanding. Pupils in key stage 2 develop a good awareness of the native inhabitants of the tropical rainforests.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

78. The findings of the inspection team agree with the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report.

79. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
18%	64%	18%	0%	0%

80. The quality of teaching in the lessons exceeds the statistics for the whole of Wales for the year 2005-06, as published in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's Annual Report, where Grades 1 and 2 were awarded in 79% of lessons.

81. A very good relationship exists between teachers and pupils, and this promotes the teaching and learning outstandingly. Teachers display a good knowledge of their pupils and this enables them to respond to their needs.

82. Teachers have a good knowledge of the contents of the curriculum and other areas of learning, and their understanding of current strategies, such as developing pupils' thinking skills, is good.

83. Amongst the outstanding and good features seen in the lessons are:

- challenging pupils to reason and think;
- setting time-scales for tasks in order to ensure development in the lesson;
- outstanding questioning to summarise findings;
- nurturing pupils' ability to listen intently to each other;
- opportunity for pupils to work together, without over-intervention, and
- sensitive, quiet but effective support.

84. In some lessons the following shortcomings were seen:

- at times, not enough attention is given to promoting the progress of children under five years of age, with regard to intervening in their learning whilst they are involved in activities and there is no obvious strategy for developing specific skills, and
- some lessons are not summarised effectively to reinforce that which has been learnt.

85. Evidence in pupils' books suggests that teachers, at times, over-use worksheets, at the expense of providing pupils with opportunities to record their tasks at greater length.

86. The school's system for assessment, recording and reporting to parents is good. Teachers assess the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and highlight areas for development. Assessment is used regularly in order to inform, plan and set targets at individual pupil level. Diagnostic tests are used to assess the progress of children with ALN and individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared for them.

87. Several methods are used as a basis for assessment, such as informal observation, setting specific targets, self-evaluation forms and standardised tests. Samples of work are kept that represent different levels of achievement in a number of subjects in order to standardise and moderate assessments. Records are kept of spelling tests that have been graded and a record of reading books. In mathematics, assessment is reinforced through using a computerised program.
88. Pupils are given clear guidelines on how to improve their work and they are aware of what is expected of them. Assessment is linked with a task, and pupils self-evaluate their work with the teacher, identifying the strengths and weaknesses. Targets are set that are constantly discussed. These personal targets help them to focus their efforts.
89. Overall, the quality of marking of pupils' work is good. The marking procedures show importance for oral and written feedback and give guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.
90. Information on pupils' progress is regularly shared with parents. They are invited to school each term to discuss the progress of their children, an arrangement that is appreciated by parents. Annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements, and are of good quality. In addition to the general comments on what pupils have achieved in each subject, reference is made to their personal qualities and their behaviour and individual targets.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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91. The findings of the inspection team differ from the grade the school gave itself in its self-evaluation report. In the opinion of the inspection team, there are outstanding features in the provision, including the wealth of extra-curricular experiences offered, the strategies for developing pupils' key skills, the quality of the provision for spiritual moral, social and cultural development and the partnership with other providers.
92. Curricular planning in the school provides a co-ordinated base for meeting the learning needs of pupils and offers a broad framework on content and skills across the subjects. Planning is thorough, meeting the statutory requirements and reflecting the main aims of the school of ensuring equal access for each learner.
93. Policies and schemes of work have been adopted for each subject of the National Curriculum (NC), religious education and the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. Schemes of work are detailed and the quality and range of learning experiences are good.
94. There are outstanding provision and strategies for developing pupils' basic and key skills. This is reflected in pupils' ability to work independently and make mature decisions. Good use is made of information technology and emphasis is placed on the ability to develop investigative skills and solve problems. The school has gained the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark for the third time.

95. The school provides an exceptional variety of experiences of good quality for its pupils, including educational visits that correspond to the termly themes, speakers who visit, sporting opportunities, musical tuition, residential courses and opportunities to develop pupils' performing and creative skills in art and music through competitions in the Urdd eisteddfod.
96. The broad learning experiences promote pupils' moral, spiritual, social and cultural development outstandingly well. Pupils contribute towards charities and consider those less fortunate than themselves. Through a charitable movement, pupils regularly contribute towards improving the life of a young girl adopted in Rwanda; they correspond with her once a term. Pupils support each other and are aware of good behaviour. The deserved praise and rewards help pupils to respect the attitudes, feelings and values of other people. The spiritual element during collective worship and the PSE sessions enriches their experiences and reinforces the community atmosphere within the school.
97. Their cultural development is further promoted as they participate in local projects, such as those under the auspices of Tŷ Siamas, so that they become aware of old traditions such as *Hel Calennig*, *Y Fari Lwyd*, and *Chanu Plygain* through 'Immersion in Heritage', in the care of a renowned poet. Fieldwork opportunities during residential courses are used to further develop their awareness of their culture. Through subjects such as religious education, geography, music and art, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and of other cultures.
98. The depth and quality of partnerships with the school is outstanding. Outstanding support was received from the parents during the pre-inspection meeting and extremely supportive responses were made to the questionnaires. They are active in the school, undertake educational visits and are very supportive of the Home/School agreement. The 'Friends of the School' hold a good number of activities to further the school's work and resources and raise substantial sums of money, such as through arranging a concert by a prominent choir and local artists.
99. There are very good links with the local secondary school. Due to the nature of the school and the lack of space, regular physical education lessons are arranged in the secondary school and some of the teachers there often take lessons. Through previous arrangement, use is made of other locations such as the village hall. The hall and the church are used for whole-school performances during the year and, sometimes, members of the community are given opportunities to share the stage in performances and enrich the partnership. Transport is shared with other schools in the catchment and workshops are arranged in a number of curricular subjects. As a result, a strong social relationship exists between them. The school also benefits from being twinned with a Welsh school in South Wales.
100. Local visitors are invited into the school to help, display their skill or to take assemblies. Others come on work experience from the secondary school or Coleg Meirion Dwyfor. Visitors from the world of work include the school nurse, a designer, the fire and ambulance services, a bank official and a member of the police force. Beneficial visits to locations relating to the world of work include those made to Mynydd Gwefru Llanberis, a local veterinary centre, a farm and

an art gallery. Teachers have not received placements to experience the world of work.

101. The provision for the promotion and development of pupils' bilingual skills is very good. There is provision of very good quality for the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* and Welsh culture and heritage receives a prominent place in the life and work of the school. A strong Welsh ethos permeates throughout the school. The school also challenges stereotyping and each pupil has the opportunity to attain high standards in all aspects of the school's work.
102. Promoting education for sustainable development is in the process of being developed. Paper is recycled regularly and the school is economical in its use. Different eco themes are dealt with throughout the school each term. The school has already received the Bronze award for its efforts.
103. Older pupils manage their bank account and have established a company to make Christmas cards that is developing their entrepreneurial skills well. In addition, they arrange stalls for events during the year, in order to raise money. Pupils manage the budget and the school council help to select the school's requirements from the profits, such as buying a bench in memory of a former caretaker at the school.
104. The range of school activities reflects national priorities, for example, promoting positive attitudes towards healthy eating, the effective transfer arrangements to the secondary school, pupils' ability to work independently and to take responsibility, the school's contribution in the community and the bilingual skills that contribute to good practice for lifelong learning.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

105. The findings of the inspection team agree with the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report.
106. The quality of the care, support and guidance provided for pupils shows good features and no important shortcomings. The school is a close homely community, with the staff working conscientiously to support the pupils and to encourage them to develop independence and achieve their full potential. Parents who expressed an opinion in the pre-inspection meeting, and in responding to the questionnaire, have strong confidence in the care and guidance their children receive.
107. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that there is a secure environment for them. There are effective arrangements for welcoming new pupils to the nursery class. Parents and their children are given an opportunity to visit the school before admission and these arrangements help the children to settle in quickly and happily to school life. The school has very good links with the nursery group and latecomers to the area have the opportunity to attend the Language Centre and then settle in quickly at the school. There are good link arrangements with the secondary school in order to ensure continuity and a smooth transition. A transition day is arranged as well as a special day to co-present a curricular project for the pupils who are transferring.

108. All pupils have full access to a PSE programme that permeates the curriculum. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' understanding of the need to eat healthily and to exercise the body. Everybody in the school partakes of the nourishing meals provided at lunchtime and they bring fruit to school or buy it at break time. The school is preparing for Level 4 in the Healthy Schools' scheme. Fitness, dancing, football and other exercise sessions such as skipping are arranged to encourage healthy bodies.
109. Appropriate information is provided for pupils and parents on substance misuse through inviting a member of the police to talk to them. Circle time sessions and the school council provide an effective channel for pupils to offer their opinions and discuss different issues. The Webster Stratton method is used within the school to ensure pupils' constant concentration and good behaviour. Older pupils are encouraged to care for the younger ones such as during break time.
110. The school has a good working relationship with various external agencies including the police, welfare officer, social services and the school nurse.
111. The school has appropriate policies for monitoring behaviour, attendance and punctuality, and through the school handbook, parents know of the need to inform the school of the absence of any pupil. The head telephones parents if no explanation is received.
112. Pupils' safety is well cared for. They are carefully supervised as they arrive and leave the school and during break time. Appropriate policies have been established to ensure the well-being and safety of children and are appropriately implemented. There are sound procedures in place for undertaking risk assessments whilst pupils are at the school and when they are away from the site.
113. The head has received training in child protection and the remainder of the staff are aware of the procedures. A record is kept of any sensitive problems that arise and this enables the head and parents to deal with issues before they escalate.
114. The school provides well for pupils with ALN. Their needs are identified at an early stage and they are given good support within the classroom.
115. The individual learning plans (IEPs) are well written by the teacher and the co-ordinator, who is a peripatetic teacher, and are regularly reviewed. Clear targets are set, and pupils receive sensitive and appropriate support from the teachers and assistant. Parents are consulted in full. This pastoral link continues as the pupils transfer to the secondary school.
116. There are clear procedures for dealing with any instances of bullying or unacceptable behaviour, should they arise. The school encourages high standards of behaviour and respect towards others.
117. Each pupil is encouraged to take part in all activities and the school's equal opportunities policy encourages pupils of either gender to play football and netball. Boys and girls are encouraged to become involved in all activities arranged by the school. Non-Welsh speaking latecomers are successfully integrated following a period in the local Language Unit and make rapid progress in learning Welsh.

118. Some alterations have been made to the building, such as erecting a ramp for a wheel chair and, according to need, every effort is made to provide for pupils and visitors with physical disabilities.
119. The school has a policy for the promotion of racial equality, and a statement has been drawn up that outlines the Accessibility Plan for easing the access for the disabled. Through parent questionnaires, staff become aware of the differences that need to be considered and there is no prejudice based on pupils' social, educational or linguistic background.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

120. The findings of the inspection team agree with the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report.
121. The school is led in an outstanding way by a head who is extremely conscientious and industrious. She commits herself completely to offer clear and sound guidance. She ensures that numerous guidelines and policies have been drawn up for managerial and curricular aspects. These are implemented effectively. The documents are relevant and current. A sound management procedure exists in the school.
122. As the head teaches her class for a very substantial portion of the week, the cost to her with regard to energy and time is heavy.
123. In addition, she ensures that the staff and governing body are aware of current initiatives that allow children to receive an up to date education. An example of this is the way the school was chosen to trial the 'thinking skills' learning initiatives. The strategies were incorporated into a number of lessons in both key stages, resulting in motivating activities and tasks for the pupils. A team ethos is strong in the school; there is ready support from the co-teacher, and assistant and members of the governing body to fulfil the aims and objectives of the school.
124. The head is also the current chairman of the local primary schools Strategy Group, a group that meets occasionally to discuss issues relevant to the schools in the catchment area or to primary schools in general.
125. An outstanding feature of the leadership and management of the school is the continuous effort made to ensure that the curriculum and experiences for pupils are balanced despite the lack of space and shortage of facilities at the school. This involves arrangements to use the nearby village hall and to regularly use the facilities of the local secondary school.
126. The school is committed to implementing current initiatives, whether they are ones promoted locally or nationally. The school has succeeded in attaining Step 4 of the Healthy Schools' scheme. Teachers are trained in the Webster Stratton method of behaviour management. There is planning to develop pupils' bilingual skills from an early age. The school was amongst the ones selected by the LEA to trial teaching and learning methods that nurture the 'thinking skills'.

127. The school operates appropriately, in accordance with performance management regulations, to oversee the professional development of staff. The full-time teacher is given annual objectives to achieve and a committee of the governing body oversees the head's objectives.
128. The governing body is very enthusiastic about the school and is proud of its achievements and its successes. They are interested in their responsibilities as governors and attend training courses in order to gain further knowledge.
129. Governors constantly monitor the quality of the provision, and a number of them have visited classes and other activities in the school, and produced effective reports to record the visits
130. Members are very aware of the development initiatives identified in the current SDP, and have considered their financial implications. The school's financial situation is considered and discussed in each meeting of the governing body.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

131. The findings of the inspection team agree with the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report.
132. The inspection team agreed with the school's judgement in five of the seven key questions. In the two instances where there was a difference of opinion, the inspection team awarded a higher grade than the school awarded itself.
133. The school has established a very effective monitoring procedure, in respect of time-tabling for monitoring curricular subjects and managerial aspects. Much documentation has emanated from this procedure, including comprehensive reports that are evidence of the teachers' diligence in monitoring in accordance with the planned programme.
134. Two members share the burden of the whole curriculum with regard to co-ordinating responsibilities. They have an awareness of their responsibilities. The head observes the lessons of her fellow-teacher and part of the performance management procedure; there is no evidence that the teacher observes and offers comments on the headteacher's lessons, even though, at times, she has taught the key stage 2 class.
135. The school succeeds well in seeking the views of parents and pupils on the educational provision. An appropriate questionnaire was drawn up for parents; it is a useful tool for seeking parents' opinions and to give them the opportunity to be constructively critical. A questionnaire was also distributed to pupils, and full responses were received on several aspects of the school's work. In the past, some pupils have taken advantage of the opportunities given them to draw up detailed comments about the school.
136. The governing body has discussed the self-evaluation report, and consider the grades given to be reasonable. A number of members are part of the self-evaluation through their visits to the school, observing lessons and looking at other activities. They have recorded useful comments in the 'Observation Questionnaire' provided specifically for them.

137. The self-evaluation document presented for the attention of the inspection team follows the LEA's documentary framework. The report offers a summative opinion on the seven key questions, and refers to supplementary evidence. Even so, the report does not summarise the findings in sufficient detail, and does not include comments on a number of aspects of the educational provision.
138. The current SDP, representing the period 2007-2010, is a very useful and well-organised document. It contains a statistical overview of the school, together with a detailed appraisal of the outcomes of priorities previously achieved. Clear action plans have been drawn up for fulfilling the priorities for the current year. The governing body discusses the developmental priorities and budgetary details are included where relevant.
139. The school made good progress in relation to the key issues identified in the 2002 Inspection. Detailed comments on each of the key issues were presented, recording the work that emanated from the post-inspection action plan. According to evidence from the current inspection, sound standards and a pleasant ethos continue to be features of the school; lesson expectations are now shared with pupils and '*Llew Llwyddiant*' cards are used to encourage them to consider the success of their work; portfolios of pupils' work have been developed at different levels in some of the foundation subjects, as well as the core subjects, and are used to monitor expectations and progress; the current SDP is a very useful and well-organised document; there is constant supervision of the pupils whilst they are outside on the yard; thorough risk assessments have been undertaken on aspects of the building and its use.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

140. The findings of the inspection team agree with the grade the school gave itself in its self-evaluation report. The shortcomings in respect of space and facilities, which are beyond the control of the head, are valid reasons for awarding a Grade 2 to this key question, whilst awarding a Grade 1 to key question 5.
141. Two full-time teachers are employed, including the head. This is sufficient for the number of pupils on roll. They develop their proficiency further by attending courses, including training over an extended period, such as days for the Webster Stratton strategy and a course in preparation for the Foundation Phase.
142. A classroom assistant is employed for four days a week; she also undertakes an administrative role for a portion of her time. Her contribution in both classes is very effective, and the way in which she knows the pupils well promotes the relationship between them.
143. There is a sufficient supply of resources in the school for the areas of the curriculum and pupils have ease of access to them during lessons. They are used in an efficient and effective manner.
144. The school is located in a building that is extremely lacking with regard to space within and the facilities outside. Although the building, including all nooks and crannies, is used in an effective way, lack of space and rooms for 'occasional'

use are a feature of the school. It is managerial resourcefulness and curricular organisation that ensures the pupils receive balanced opportunities that are reinforced in sessions and activities on other sites.

145. A homely ethos and organisation are features of the school, and the walls of the classroom are used constantly to display pupils' work tastefully. The building is kept clean.
146. A supply teacher is employed for one day each week, in order to release both teachers in turn from their class responsibilities. Teachers use these periods for planning, preparation and assessment, and the head is of the opinion that these are essential periods. The inspection team is of the opinion that the head should, in light of constant managerial and pastoral demands, receive and implement that which is due to her in respect of further non-contact time.
147. Members of the governing body constantly discuss the annual budget in detail, ensuring that financing of staff is a priority. Even so, they have been supervising a rather significant under-spend over recent years. Although efforts were made to use a portion of it, the annual under spending continues to be greater than the sum recommended by the Audit Commission.
148. The school gives good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

Following the inspection of the school on the 20-30 January 2008, the staff and governing body have considered the findings of the inspection and agree with those findings. Overall, they agree with the self-evaluation document that is an underpinning feature of the school's management. We are pleased that the opinion of the team agrees with the judgement of the school in five out of the seven key questions, and that the team has seen fit to raise the grades in the other two questions.

We believe that the report reflects the hard work of all the staff, committed governors and parents to ensure the best possible provision for all the pupils and the local community.

The report confirms that we achieve our aim of providing the best education possible and of creating a happy and secure school where our pupils can gain in confidence and independence.

We will incorporate the recommendations identified in the report into our SDP, in order to build on the current good work undertaken in Ysgol Brithdir.

The governors and staff at Ysgol Brithdir would like to thank the registered inspector and his team for recognising their strengths and clearly identifying some aspects that we can develop further.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Brithdir DOLGELLAU Gwynedd
Postcode	LL40 2RH
Telephone number	01341 423035

Headteacher	Mrs Menna Wynne-Pugh
Date of appointment	September 1995
Chair of governors	Mr Geraint Evans
Registered inspector	Len Jones
Dates of inspection	29-30 January 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	6	5	4	5	1	2	5	9	37

Total number of teachers			
Number of teachers	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
	2	-	2

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	14:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	-
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	15.1
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.1:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Spring 2007	93.4	92.1	92
Summer 2007	95	95.6	95.3
Autumn 2007	91.7	95.4	89.4

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	3%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2007	Number of pupils in Y2	1
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of key stage 1 was fewer than five, summary information is not included		

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2007	Number of pupils in Y6	3
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of key stage 2 was fewer than five, summary information is not included		

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection was undertaken by a team of three inspectors, who were present in the school for five 'inspection days'.
- Pre-inspection meetings were held with the parents, where there were 15 parents present, and with the governing body, to discuss the life and work of the school.
- Twenty-nine parents' questionnaires were returned and these were carefully analysed.
- Discussions were held with the head and teachers.
- School documentation was examined.
- Eleven lessons or parts of lessons were observed.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils reading in both languages.
- Samples of pupils' work from each year group were examined.
- Discussions were held with pupils on aspects of the school's work and of their work.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during play time, lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school's sessions.
- Inspectors were present during sessions of collective worship.
- Post-inspection meetings were held with the staff and governing body.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Len Jones (Registered inspector)	Context and priorities; Summary and recommendations; Key Questions 1, 2(a), 5, 6 and 7
Audrey Evans (Team Inspector)	Key questions 2(b), 3 and 4
Dylan Jones (Lay Inspector)	Contributions to key questions 1,2, 3, 4 and 7
Menna Wynne-Pugh	Nominee

Acknowledgement

The inspectors wish to thank the governors, the headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.

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