

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

**A Report on the Quality of Education in**

**Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau  
Ffordd Pen y Cefn  
Dolgellau  
LL40 2YW**

**School Number: 6613041**

**Date of Inspection: 15/06/09**

**by**

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Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau 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 Dolgellau took place between 15/06/09 and 17/06/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Gwilym Trebor Roberts 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:

<b>Grade 1</b>	good with outstanding features
<b>Grade 2</b>	good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Grade 3</b>	good features outweigh shortcomings
<b>Grade 4</b>	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
<b>Grade 5</b>	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 standard 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 Gynradd Dolgellau is a voluntarily controlled Church in Wales school. It is situated on the northern outskirts of the town. The primary school is located in two buildings on sites separated by a public highway.
2. The school draws most of its pupils from Dolgellau itself, with a small number coming from the surrounding villages. The catchment area is described by the school as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and the pupils represent the full ability range.
3. At the time of the inspection, there were 169 pupils on roll, including 19 children of nursery age who attend the school in the afternoon. Six pupils attend the unit for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) which is situated on the school site.
4. Arrangements are underway, and are to be finalised before the beginning of the next term, so that the unit is fully included as the school's responsibility. Because of this it was decided to include the unit as an aspect of this inspection. The pupils who attend the unit are registered as pupils in this school.
5. Around 21% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 44 (26%) are identified as having SEN, including seven pupils who have statements of SEN.
6. Twenty percent (20%) of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as the first language.
7. At the time of the inspection, there were three temporary teachers at the school, two of them located at the special unit, Tŷ Aran.
8. The school was last inspected in the summer term 2003.
9. The head teacher has been in post since April 2009.

### The school's priorities and targets

The school's priorities and targets are to:

- Review and adapt schemes of work to correspond to the 2008 Curriculum;
- Establish the Foundation Phase;
- Raise the levels of health and fitness;
- Further develop the use of thinking skills throughout the school;
- Draw up a Staff Development Plan;
- Develop the role of the management team;
- Ensure that there are sufficient quantities of measuring equipment throughout the school;
- Ensure that there is a collection of artefacts and pictures by famous artists.

## Summary

10. The pupils are happy in school and a good relationship exists between them and the teaching and ancillary staff. There is a caring and inclusive ethos in the school.

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	Grade 2
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 2
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 3
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 3
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 3

11. The inspectors agreed with the school's judgement in its self evaluation report in five of the seven key questions. The inspection team awarded a grade 3 instead of the grade 2 the school awarded itself in key questions 4 and 7.

## Standards

12. The standards of achievement in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
20%	72%	8%	0%	0%

13. These percentages are above the average percentages for the whole of Wales, as published in the Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) Annual Report 2007-2008 that standards of achievement are good or better (grade 1 and 2) in 84% of lessons and outstanding (grade 1) in 12% of lessons.
14. The quality of the educational provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.
15. The standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subjects	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh first language	2	2
Science	2	2
Information Technology	1	1
Geography	2	2
Art and design	2	1
Physical Education	2	2

16. Most pupils make good progress towards achieving the personal targets set for them. A few pupils with SEN do not make sufficient progress. The standards in the special unit, Tŷ Aran are good and the pupils make good progress.
17. The children under five make good progress in the key skills of speaking and listening, early reading and writing, numeracy and use of information and communication technology (ICT).
18. The standards and progress of key stage 1 and key stage 2 children in listening, speaking, reading and writing in Welsh are good. The standards of key stage 2 pupils in listening, speaking, reading and writing English are good. The standards of pupils at both key stages in their use of mathematics across the curriculum are good and are good with outstanding features in their use of ICT.
19. The pupil's bilingual ability is good across the school.
20. At key stage 1, when compared with the results of similar schools as regards numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, the core subject indicator (CSI) result, that is the percentage of pupils attaining level 2 or above in Welsh, mathematics and science, placed the school in the lowest 25% of schools in 2006 and 2008 and in the top 25% of schools in 2007.
21. The key stage 1 pupil cohorts in 2006 and 2008 included a higher than usual number of pupils that the school had recognised as pupils with SEN.
22. At key stage 2, when compared with the results of similar schools as regards numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, the CSI result, that is the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 or above in Welsh or English, mathematics and science, placed the school in the lowest 50% of schools in 2006, the lowest 25% in 2007 and in the top 50% of schools in 2008.
23. School records show that almost every pupil on the school roll at the end of key stage 1 had made progress of two levels by the end of key stage 2 in 2008 in every core subject.
24. There is no pattern of differences in performance between boys and girls.
25. The pupils make good progress in learning. Pupils work hard and enthusiastically in lessons and use their time effectively.
26. There are good features outweighing shortcomings in the progress made by pupils with SEN.
27. The standards of behaviour are good. Pupils respect one another well and are very tolerant of pupils with learning difficulties.
28. The average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection was around 91.5%. There is room to improve upon this.

29. The progress pupils make in their personal, social and moral development is good. They work together with ease in group or pair situations and they are very willing to help each other. They display concern towards their peers and accept responsibility for their work. They display honesty and fairness in their involvement with others.

### **The quality of education and training**

30. In the lessons observed, the quality of the teaching is as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
16%	71%	13%	0%	0%

31. These percentages compare favourably with the quality of teaching in primary schools nationally (HMCI's Annual Report for 2007 – 2008) where the quality of teaching is good or better (grade 1 and 2) in 83% of lessons and outstanding (grade 1) in 16% of lessons.
32. There is a good working relationship between staff and pupils.
33. The outstanding features of the teaching include very high expectations for pupils' achievements, concise and lively presentations that fire the pupils' imagination and motivate them, as well as opportunities for pupils to display creativity and originality.
34. The good features of the teaching include detailed planning in preparing appropriate activities and resources and using a variety of teaching methods effectively. Also, teachers use skilled questioning techniques to support and challenge pupils are good; teachers summarise at the end of lessons and return to the criteria for success.
35. In the lessons where there are shortcomings, the focus on outcomes for the pupils is not sufficiently clear and there is insufficient support to fulfil the needs of less able individuals. The pace of lessons is inadequate.
36. The school's policies and procedures for assessment and reporting on pupils attainment meets the statutory requirements well. Assessments for pupils with SEN are in place. However, the support that follows is not always specific enough.
37. The school meets pupils' interests and requirements well.
38. The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Personal and social education (PSE) permeates naturally through the school's daily life and work.
39. The school's lessons and activities promote the pupils' bilingualism well.

40. The school provides good quality personal support and guidance for pupils and it promotes pupils' health and fitness well.
41. The head teacher's and governors' attention was drawn to a number of safety issues, emanating mainly from lack of maintenance. Shortcomings as regards the safety of entrances to the site and to the building are important shortcomings. Also, the arrangements to update the safeguarding children procedures are not secure enough.
42. The school's arrangements for recognising pupils with SEN are effective, but there is insufficient purposeful planning for them.
43. The provision in the special unit, Tŷ Aran, is good. Tŷ Aran pupils integrate successfully within the school.
44. Good attention is paid to ensuring equal opportunity for every pupil in the school.

### **Leadership and management**

45. The head teacher is very new to his post. He is supported by an industrious and enthusiastic management team. The day to day life of the school reflects the shared values of the staff well.
46. The School Development Plan (SDP) is a useful document. The school has established a comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating the provision and pupils' standards of achievement. However, the link between the outcomes of the school evaluation procedure and priorities for development is insufficient.
47. The governing body is supportive of the head teacher and the school. The governors' roles as critical friends have not developed sufficiently and they have not ensured that the school meets all the statutory requirements.
48. The teachers have a wide range of qualifications, specialties and experience which enables them to teach all aspects of the school's curriculum. The assistants work closely and conscientiously with the teachers.
49. The decisions made about deployment of staff means that the reception class is too big when the nursery children join in the afternoon. As a result of this, the school does not comply with statutory requirements as regards class size.
50. The resources are in a good condition, accessible to teachers and pupils across the school and are used effectively and efficiently. There are good features that outweigh shortcomings in the stock of Foundation Phase resources.
51. The classrooms and the school hall are sufficient in size for the number of pupils. The school makes good and effective use of the land that surrounds it and extends the pupils' experiences beyond the confines of the building. However, insufficient attention has been paid to maintaining the buildings and the site.

52. The special unit, Tŷ Aran, is in a building that has been adapted for a small number of pupils but access to it is inconvenient because of the slope outside. The school has also set another appropriate room aside for the unit's use.
53. The current head teacher and the governors work together closely in managing the school's budget. The school offers value for money.
54. The school has responded well to the key issues noted in the last inspection.

## Recommendations

In order to improve the school and raise standards, the staff and governing body need to:

- R1: maintain the good and outstanding standards in the curricular areas;
- R2: plan more intentionally to ensure the progress of all pupils with SEN;
- R3: review the arrangements for deployment of staff so that the school complies with class size requirements;
- R4: improve attendance;
- R5: take decisive action on the issues noted in the site's risk assessment;
- R6: reinforce the governing body's active role as regards monitoring standards and implementing managerial arrangements and ensure that it conforms to statutory requirements, and
- R7: improve the link between self-evaluation procedures and the School Development Plan.

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 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

55. The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.

56. The standards of achievement in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
20%	72%	8%	0%	0%

57. These percentages are above the average percentages for the whole of Wales as reported in HMCI's Annual Report 2007-2008, namely that standards of achievement were good or better (grade 1 and 2) in 84% percent of lessons and outstanding (grade 1) in 12 per cent of lessons.

58. The quality of the provision for the under fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.

59. The standards of achievement in the subjects inspected are as follows:

Subjects	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh first language	2	2
Science	2	2
Information Technology	1	1
Geography	2	2
Art and design	2	1
Physical Education	2	2

60. In all areas and subjects inspected, across the school, pupils achieve good standards or better. Most pupils make good progress towards achieving the personal targets set for them. A few pupils who have SEN do not make sufficient progress. The standards in the special unit, Tŷ Aran, are good and the pupils make good progress.

61. The children under five make good progress in the early key skills of speaking, listening, early reading and writing, numeracy and using ICT.

62. The standards and progress of pupils at key stage 1 and key stage 2 in listening and speaking, reading and writing skills in Welsh are good. The standards of pupils at key stage 2 in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English are good. The standards of pupils at both key stages are good when using mathematics across the curriculum and are good with outstanding features when they use ICT.

63. The pupils' bilingual competence is developing well across the school. In key stage 1, Welsh learners become increasingly confident as they use the language to discuss and record their work in a number of curricular contexts. In key stage 2, the majority of the pupils communicate orally with ease and read and write well in Welsh and English.
64. In 2008, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above according to teacher assessments at the end of key stage 1 was 100% for science and 86.7% for Welsh and mathematics. The results for science were above the county and national results, whilst results for Welsh and mathematics were lower than county and national results.
65. When compared with the results of schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results of the core subject indicator at the end of key stage 1, namely the number of pupils achieving level 2 or above in Welsh, mathematics and science, placed the school in the lowest 25% of schools in 2006 and 2008 and in the top 25% of schools in 2007.
66. The pupil cohort in 2006 and 2008 had higher than normal numbers of pupils that the school had recognised as pupils with SEN.
67. In 2008, according to teacher assessment results at the end of key stage 2, the percentages reaching level 4 or above were 87% for science, 82.6% for English and mathematics and 78.3% in Welsh. The results for Welsh were lower than those of the county and higher than national results. Results for English, mathematics and science were higher than county and national results.
68. When compared with the results of schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results of the core subject indicator at the end of key stage 2, namely the number of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Welsh or English, as well as mathematics and science, placed the school in the lowest 50% of schools in 2006, in the lowest 25% in 2007 and in the top 50% in 2008.
69. School data shows that almost every pupil who was on the school roll at the end of key stage 1 had progressed by two levels by the end of key stage 2, in every one of the core subjects in 2008.
70. There is no pattern of differences in performance between boys and girls.
71. Pupils make good progress in learning. They acquire new knowledge and skills effectively as they complete their tasks. They are very willing to offer their own ideas.
72. Pupils of all ages possess a good understanding of what they are doing and they increasingly develop the ability to assess good features in their own work and that of their peers and to consider what they need to do in order to improve.
73. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the progress that pupils with SEN and who are in mainstream classes make. A few of these pupils do not make good progress as the arrangements to implement and review their individual action plans are not thorough enough.

74. The pupils work hard in the lessons and use their time effectively. They concentrate well on their tasks, display high motivation and make good progress towards achieving their potential. They respond enthusiastically in lessons and show interest in their work.
75. Standards of behaviour are good. Many pupils across the age range behave responsibly in every situation in school. They respect each other well and are very tolerant towards pupils who have learning difficulties.
76. The average attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection was around 91.5%. There is room to improve upon this. There are hardly any unauthorised absences.
77. The punctuality of most pupils is good.
78. The pupils take good advantage of opportunities to work independently and organise their own work and make decisions about the next steps to take in their learning. Pupils throughout the school are able to display a good degree of creativity and imagination when solving problems.
79. The pupils' creative skills are good with outstanding features, particularly in art in key stage 2.
80. The progress pupils make in their personal, spiritual, social and moral development is good. They co-operate in pair and group situations with ease and they are very willing to help one another. They display concern towards their peers and they take responsibility for their work. They display honesty and fairness in their dealings with others.
81. Pupils of all ages display good awareness of equal opportunity issues and respect towards diversity in society.
82. The school succeeds well in preparing pupils to take a full role in the community. Through a number of extra-curricular activities and appropriate educational visits, they develop a knowledge of their community and they participate in a good number of community activities.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

83. The findings of the inspection team for this key question match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.

84. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
16%	71%	13%	0%	0%

85. These percentages compare favourably with the quality of teaching in primary schools nationally (HMCI's Annual Report 2007 - 2008) where the quality of teaching is good or better (grade 1 and 2) in 83% of lessons and outstanding (grade 1) in 16%.

86. Across the school, there is a good working relationship between the teachers, assistants and pupils. The teachers have good subject knowledge and they are familiar with the most recent developments in their area. The temporary teachers in the Tŷ Aran unit make outstanding use of teaching assistants to support the learning.

87. The outstanding features of the teaching include:

- high expectations as regards pupils' achievement;
- concise and lively presentations that fire the pupils' imaginations and motivate them;
- providing pupils with opportunities to display creativity and originality.

88. The good features of the teaching include:

- detailed planning to prepare appropriate activities and resources;
- using a range of teaching methods in an effective manner;
- discussing criteria for success and displaying them visually;
- presenting terms and phrases on a regular basis to enrich language;
- skilful questioning to support and challenge pupils, and
- summarising at the end of lessons and revisiting the criteria for success.

89. In the lessons where there are shortcomings, there is:

- lack of a sufficiently clear focus on the outcomes for pupils;
- insufficient support to fulfil the needs of less able individuals, and
- a slow pace in lessons.

90. The school's policy and procedures for assessing and reporting on pupils' achievement and progress meet the statutory requirements well.

91. The teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly in line with the school's policy. On the whole, assessment is used well to plan and improve learning.
92. The assessments of pupils with SEN are in place. However, the resulting support is not always sufficiently specific for those pupils who are in mainstream classes. There are detailed records that track the progress of individual pupils in Tŷ Aran and these offer a good foundation for further planning.
93. The teachers share success criteria and provide pupils with good opportunities to assess their own work. Through this, pupils become increasingly aware of the purpose of assessment and what they need to do to improve their work.
94. The school co-operates effectively with other primary schools in the catchment area and the local secondary school to standardise assessments, particularly at the end of key stage 2.
95. Reports to parents are good. They outline personal and subject development.

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

**Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

96. The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report.
97. The school responds well to the pupils' needs and interests.
98. The curriculum in key stage 1 and key stage 2 offers a broad, varied and balanced provision which promotes good progress. It complies with all the statutory requirements.
99. The overall quality of the educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children are making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. The rich nature of the provision is restricted as the class is too large when the nursery children join reception class children in the afternoon.
100. The Tŷ Aran provision offers a wide range of learning and valuable activities for the pupils.
101. The curricular planning places a deliberate emphasis on developing the key skills.
102. Good and effective use is made of the area around the school and it broadens the pupils' experiences beyond the confines of the school.
103. The pupils and the parents praise the broad provision that includes opportunities to perform in shows and concerts, Urdd activities, environmental work and sports in co-operation with local clubs.
104. This church school complies with the statutory requirement to conduct a daily act of collective worship. The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. PSE permeates naturally through the life and work of the school on a daily basis.
105. The pupils become familiar with democratic processes by electing a School Council which has recommenced its work conscientiously, suggesting improvements to aspects of school life.
106. The school's lessons and activities promote the pupils' bilingualism well.
107. The school promotes the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* in an outstanding manner across a wide range of subjects.
108. Amongst the numerous links with the community, pupils visit local homes for the elderly and members of the community come into the school to share their expertise. There are outstanding partnerships with local sports teams and clubs.

109. The parents praise the school's open door policy and they appreciate the regular letters they receive and the opportunities to attend open evenings. There is an active Parent/Teacher Association which raises money to buy additional resources.
110. Through the Green School Scheme the school promotes the development and pupils' understanding of the importance of sustainability well. The pupils are enthusiastic in their support of recycling campaigns and energy saving.
111. Good attention is paid to promoting pupils' awareness of fair trade and collecting for charities.
112. There are numerous social and curricular links with the local secondary school.
113. The staff derive benefit from joint planning meetings with staff from other primary schools in the catchment area.
114. There are valuable links with a number of external agencies such as the police, the fire service and the Snowdonia National Park Authority and these enrich the pupils' experiences and have a positive impact on the provision and standards of achievement.
115. Students from schools and colleges and teachers in training come to the school to gain useful periods of work experience.
116. Good opportunities are arranged to develop pupils' awareness of the world of work. The youngest pupils carry out role play in imaginary areas such as a seaside café. Older pupils occasionally visit business sites, such as a local supermarket. They study aspects of the local economy in subjects such as geography and history.
117. The pupils' entrepreneurial skills are developed well through pair and group problem solving activities. Some of these activities are set in context, such as arranging a party, cooking and selling cakes, growing and selling plants and selling fruit in school. These activities offer good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and learn about the principles of pricing, marketing and selling.

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

##### **Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

118. The inspection team's findings do not correspond with the school's judgement in its self evaluation report. There are shortcomings as regards safety at the entrances to the site and the building and the planning for pupils with SEN is not sufficiently focused.
119. The pupils are happy in school and the relationship between them and the teaching and ancillary staff is good. The school has a caring and inclusive ethos and the pupils are appreciated and supported by all the adults.
120. The school co-operates in a good partnership with parents and considers their views. The parents trust the care and guidance given to their children and the way the school responds to any issue they raise.
121. There are effective arrangements to enable the younger pupils to settle in the school with ease.
122. The school provides pupils with good quality personal support and guidance. The staff know the pupils well and are aware of their personal and educational needs. The PSE programme pays good attention to pupils' needs.
123. Every pupil is given an opportunity to express their views and to convey concerns through the class councils and by using the "feelings boxes" which are in every class. Members of the School Council now meet regularly and offer ways of developing the school for the pupils' benefit.
124. The school monitors attendance and punctuality. Recently, the procedure for recording and following up absences has been improved. The governors have set attendance targets for the next three years.
125. The school has effective strategies that promote good behaviour and emphasis is placed on praise and nurturing the self image of every pupil. The pupils were satisfied with the school's response to rare examples of playtime disagreements.
126. The school promotes pupils' health and fitness well. Phase 3 of the Healthy Schools Scheme has been completed. Healthy eating is encouraged by having a fruit shop. The curricular provision to promote fitness is reinforced by the 'Keep Going' running club and the provision of playground equipment.
127. Fire drills are held once a term and equipment is regularly inspected. Four members of staff hold a full, current first aid qualification. Risk assessments are conducted when there are visits. The head teacher's and the governors' attention was drawn to a number of safety issues linked mainly to a lack of maintenance. The school had already identified most of them but had not dealt with them at the time of the inspection. Shortcomings as regards entrances to the site and the building are important shortcomings.

128. The head teacher is the designated person for safeguarding children. There is also a member of the governing body who undertakes responsibility for this area. The staff are aware of the arrangements and their responsibilities in this area but the arrangements to keep the school's procedures up to date are not specific enough.
129. The school's arrangements for identifying pupils with SEN are effective, but there is insufficient specific planning for them. As a result, the suitability of the provision for these pupils varies and not all the pupils make sufficient progress.
130. The provision for the pupils at the Tŷ Aran special unit is good. Teachers use techniques and teaching styles that are appropriate for the pupils and their individual educational targets. There is close contact, through the daily diary, between the staff of Tŷ Aran and the pupils' parents. The Tŷ Aran pupils integrate successfully within the school. Some integrate socially whilst others gain significant benefit from joining in lessons.
131. The school has effective strategies that ensure appropriate support for pupils with behavioural problems. The school has measures to respond to any oppressive behaviour and respect towards others is regularly emphasised through techniques such as the courtesy corner.
132. Good attention is paid to ensuring equal opportunity for every pupil in the school. The emphasis placed on respect and tolerance in the school's life and work promotes equality of the sexes, good race relations and respect for diversity.
133. The school has a disability equality plan and an appropriate action plan to ensure equal opportunity for disabled pupils.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

134. The findings of the inspection team match the school's findings in its self-evaluation report.
135. The head teacher is very new to his post. In a short space of time, he has successfully created an effective working relationship and purposeful co-operation amongst teachers and governors.
136. The head teacher is supported by an enthusiastic and hard working management team. The leadership they provide has had a positive impact on the quality of planning, assessment and pupils' standards of achievement.
137. The agreed values amongst the staff are reflected well in the daily life of the school.
138. There is a good range of curricular policies which offer good guidance to promote the pupils' development and progress. There are gaps, however, in the school's managerial policies and documentation.
139. Good consideration is given to local and national priorities such as promoting healthy eating and fitness, revising the 2008 curriculum for key stage 2. There are good features that outweigh shortcomings in the presentation of the Foundation Phase, mainly because of decisions made as regards deployment of staff.
140. Whole school targets for attainment at the end of key stages are set. These targets are achievable but they are not always sufficiently challenging.
141. The staff's dedication to their work is very good. They are very industrious and they work together well to fulfil the expectations placed on them.
142. Performance management arrangements are implemented and lead to good provision for teachers' professional development. These opportunities have had a positive impact on standards in the subjects inspected.
143. The governing body is supportive of the head and shows pride in the school. Governors have received reports, adopted the SDP and have adopted and reviewed a collection of managerial policies. Their role as critical friend has not developed sufficiently and, as a result, they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring standards and setting a strategic direction for the school.
144. The school handbook is a useful document and an annual report has been produced for parents. However, over the past four years, a copy of this report has not been provided for parents and they have not been invited to a meeting to discuss the report. Therefore, the governors have not ensured that the school meets all the statutory requirements.

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

### **Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

145. The findings of the inspection team match the findings of the school in its self-evaluation report.
146. A comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating the provision and pupils' standards of achievement has been established. The school follows a timetable that pays attention to all subjects and areas over a period of time. Attention is paid to the use of resources, to pupils' work and outcomes, and to teaching and learning through lesson observation.
147. The school analyses the results data of end of key stage assessments in detail in order to compare it with the previous years' performance and with that of other schools locally and nationally.
148. Opportunities are provided for pupils to make a contribution to the school's self evaluation through the School Council but there is no formal system to discover the parents' views about the school. The views of a number of partners with whom the school works have been sought.
149. The quality of the self evaluation report presented to the inspection team is good. It pays systematic attention to issues relating to the seven key questions in the Inspection Framework and offers honest and open views. The inspection team agreed with the school's judgements in five out of the seven key questions. In questions four and seven, the inspection team awarded a grade 3 rather than the grade 2 awarded by the school.
150. The SDP is a useful document. It includes an evaluation of the implementation of the previous development plan, notes priorities and actions to be taken as well as expected outcomes. Sufficient human and financial resources are earmarked in order to implement the priorities. However, the link between the outcomes of the school evaluation procedure and the priorities for development is insufficient.
151. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The pupils' standards of achievement at key stage 1 and key stage 2 in both Welsh and physical education are now good. The quality of the marking, on the whole, is good and the comments note what needs to be done in order to improve. Good attention is paid to teaching and learning in the monitoring and self evaluation procedure. A swimming programme is offered to key stage 2 pupils and leads to many of the pupils making good progress.

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

### **Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

152. The findings of the inspection team do not match the school's findings in its self-evaluation report. There are important shortcomings regarding the deployment of staff in the Foundation Phase.
153. The complement of teaching staff is good and teachers possess a wide range of qualifications, specialisms and experience that enables them to teach all aspects of the school's curriculum. Effective use is made of staff's specialisms and interests by exchanging classes regularly to present some aspects of the curriculum.
154. The assistants work closely and conscientiously with the teachers in planning, teaching and recording pupils' progress.
155. The half time administrative support assists effectively with the school's administration and makes a contribution to reducing teachers' workload as one aspect of the workforce remodelling programme.
156. The stock of teaching resources is good across all areas of the curriculum at key stage 1 and key stage 2. There are good features which outweigh shortcomings in the stock of resources in the Foundation Phase. This varies from the supply of books to the sufficiency of large play equipment.
157. All the resources are in a good condition, accessible to teachers and pupils across the school and are used effectively and efficiently.
158. The school is on two sites separated by a public highway. The classrooms and the hall are appropriate for the number of pupils. Good use is made of the field, the playground and various locations around the school as external learning resources. However, the building and site are in need of maintenance. Details have been shared with the head teacher and the governors.
159. The Tŷ Aran special unit is in a building which has been adapted for a small number of pupils. Entrance into this building is inconvenient because of the slope outside. The school has also set an appropriate room aside in the Junior Department building for the special unit to use.
160. There is busy traffic on the road outside the gates when pupils arrive at the beginning of the school day and then leave at the end of the school day.
161. Effective arrangements have been established to ensure non-contact time for teachers in order to plan, prepare and assess.
162. Decisions taken as regards deployment of staff means that the reception class is too large in number when nursery children join the class in the afternoon. As a result, the school does not comply with statutory requirements as regards class size.

163. The management team is a good resource for the school and has already made a contribution to the school's development. The teaching staff take advantage of regular opportunities to update their skills by being given a variety of training that correlate well to their individual professional needs and the school's priorities for development. The corresponding opportunities for assistants have improved.
164. The current head teacher and the governors work closely together in managing the school's budget. They discuss a number of options in detail when setting budgetary priorities for the SDP.
165. The school offers value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh first language

**Key Stage 1: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

#### Good features

166. At key stage 1, the standard of listening and speaking of the majority of pupils is good. They listen carefully to the teachers and to their peers. The majority speak clearly and confidently using an appropriate range of vocabulary.
167. The reading skills of the majority of key stage 1 pupils are good. They read clearly and correctly, showing understanding. They use their knowledge of letters and the relationship between sounds and symbols to build unfamiliar words. The most able pupils read fluently and talk about their favourite books and stories, expressing views about events.
168. The writing ability of key stage 1 pupils is developing well. They use appropriate vocabulary and constructions. They succeed in writing effectively using a good number of sentence patterns. Their understanding of spelling and punctuation increases throughout the stage.
169. In key stage 2, the pupils match different forms of informal and formal language to a good range of purposes. They discuss well in class and in smaller groups. They use a good range of appropriate terms, vocabulary and constructions. The majority speak clearly and confidently.
170. In key stage 2, the vast majority read with good expression. They discuss books confidently referring to significant events and characters. They can discuss their reading preferences. By Y5 and Y6, they are able to discuss their favourite authors confidently.
171. The majority of key stage 2 pupils use a wide range of different written forms, and recognise their characteristics well. They use them well in different relevant contexts. They know that idioms, similes and sayings are effective instruments to enrich writing. In Y6, the most able produce exciting and interesting written pieces.
172. In key stage 2, most pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is good.

#### Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

<b>Science</b>
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**Key Stage 1: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Good features**

173. Key stage 1 pupils have good knowledge of the living and growing conditions of plants. Through practical gardening experience, Y1 pupils investigate the conditions for growing potatoes and other vegetables well. Y2 pupils, by observing and measuring the growth of their plants in class have recorded the growth well over a period of time as a block graph.
174. Many Y2 pupils understand well that various living things have common characteristics. They sort objects well into categories of objects that are alive, that are not alive, and those that have never been alive. They are good at classifying familiar materials under headings that they are given, such as wood, plastic, metal, glass, as part of their studies of homes.
175. Previous work shows that key stage 1 pupils understand the characteristics of day and night and the order of the days of the week well. Y2 pupils show that they know about some sources of light and have good knowledge of examples of everyday use of electricity.
176. Many key stage 2 pupils conduct a good variety of different types of investigations to find answers and to solve problems. They gather information from books and from websites, they investigate, they classify, use models and conduct fair tests in different contexts well.
177. Previous work shows that Y3 pupils have developed a good understanding of the requirements of a fair test. They use a pre prepared frame as a guideline to try to discover what paper is best at soaking up water. They record their results well in a table and they draw a block graph to show their results. They interpret the graphs well as they offer their conclusions.
178. Many Y4 pupils have good ideas about how to classify and put bugs/ small creatures into groups that share the same characteristics. With help, they form good questions to enable them to classify the creatures on the basis of visible features.
179. Many Y5 pupils have good knowledge and understanding about forces. They convey this by using appropriate vocabulary such as friction, gravity and air resistance. They can model their ideas well by drawing diagrams which show what force is operational and in which direction.
180. The most able pupils in Y5 can apply their knowledge well when they design their own fair test when they compare which boat travels fastest. In their planning, they choose their own method of measuring and recording. When they develop their ideas, they make good use of their previous knowledge about air resistance to design the shape of their boats.

181. Many Y6 pupils investigate well. By working carefully, they can recognise and compare different parts of flowers. They convey their findings using correct vocabulary. They use instruments appropriately and, when it is necessary, use a microscope confidently to support their observations.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings

## Information technology

**Key Stage 1: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features**

### Outstanding features

182. Across the two key stages, the pupils are very confident and skilful users of information technology. Pupils across the age and ability range work independently for prolonged periods. Their detailed knowledge of the characteristics of the computer programs they use allows them to make choices and act upon them with complete confidence to create the desired effect or outcome in order to communicate their ideas.
183. Many Y2 pupils form sentences, import a picture and add sound from a menu independently without adult support.
184. By Y6, pupils arrange and communicate information in an outstanding manner bearing the user's requirements in mind. They design multimedia presentations of a high quality. They use animation skilfully to enhance the complete nature of the whole presentation.

### Good features

185. Key stage 1 pupils control the mouse with increasing confidence.
186. Many Y2 pupils use the features of art software to create patterns well.
187. Previous work shows that Y2 pupils input information into a database and use the information to create a block graph.
188. Nearly all Y2 pupils predict well the path of the 'Beebot' floor turtle. They feed instructions to the toy to follow a route they have planned, that includes both left and right turns.
189. Y3 pupils process words confidently selecting and varying the size of letters, colour and use effects such as underlining well.
190. Y4 pupils carry out web searches to find information for designing pamphlets. They import pictures and arrange them in order. They add writing to create finished work of a good standard.
191. The majority of Y5 pupils develop the necessary skills to use spreadsheets well. When they arrange a class party, they use information which they have sourced on a website about the price of goods to model different cost options for spending.
192. Previous work shows that Y5 and Y6 pupils use data, feed information into data bases and carry out appropriate searches well.
193. Y6 pupils confidently send e-mails with attachments they have added.

194. Y6 pupils are confident in modelling their ideas about designing a procedure to control the movement of a bridge and they vary the instructions in line with their intentions.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings.

## Geography

**Key Stage 1: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

### Good features

195. Y1 pupils develop their ideas well about their school as a place. With help, they investigate and record the characteristics of the location in pictorial, plan and simple table format.
196. Y2 pupils use coordinates to locate specific places on a map of Wales. They know that Cardiff is the capital of Wales. They use photographs to design a map of the town of Dolgellau well.
197. Many Y2 pupils are able to use their knowledge of the four points of the compass well in interpreting what is to be seen in any direction on a plan.
198. Y2 pupils compare and contrast characteristics of Wales and Botswana well. They have good knowledge of some climate features such as rains and heat in Botswana as well as the wild animals that live there. They can discuss personal needs such as clothing appropriate for travellers to Botswana, in a meaningful way.
199. Y3 pupils are aware of some of the features of physical geography and ways of life that are similar and those that differ, between their own area and Ludovico in Brazil.
200. When they study a location, Y5 and Y6 pupils suggest good questions that would elicit more information through geographical investigation. Through visits and field work they find answers and form views well.
201. Most Y6 pupils can discuss their visit to Llyn Arran well, referring to the land's appearance, the environment and comparative lack of pollution.
202. Many can draw sketch maps of their journey from Llyn Arran to school using symbols and a key independently. They make good use of Google Earth and aerial maps in reminding themselves of details of the journey.
203. Y6 pupils can use ordnance survey maps to support their studies and they can find a location on a map, referring to it with four letter grid references well. They understand standard map symbols well and the most able explain confidently the significance of contour lines that are close together or further apart in showing how steep the slope is.
204. They are able to convey points of view well when arguing for and against developing the countryside. Many of them use geographical vocabulary and features when they describe the advantages of living in Dolgellau.

### Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

<b>Art</b>
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**Key Stage 1: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 1 - Good with outstanding features**

**Outstanding features**

- 205. Key stage 2 pupils reach outstanding standards when they use a wide variety of skills, a range of materials, equipment and media confidently and independently to convey their feelings.
- 206. In Y6, the pupils are confident and adventurous as they design their feelings and ideas. They reach outstanding standards in selecting the skill, medium, material and style to create striking images to convey the sadness and woe of the Second World War.

**Good features**

- 207. In Y1, the pupils reach good standards in mixing orange and yellow colours to emulate Vincent Van Gough's sunflowers and when experimenting with the vivid colours in Allen Jones' pictures, in the context of transport.
- 208. Y1 pupils make models of food in soft clay well and sketch the school building well in pencil.
- 209. Key stage 1 pupils produce patterns and also drawings and self portraits well when they use an art software package.
- 210. Y2 pupils make good use of a wide range of media such as crayons, chalk, ink, felt pens, pencils, wool, paper and material.
- 211. In Y2, a large number reach good standards when they emulate the landscape of Peter Pendergast, observe African patterns and make sketches of bugs.
- 212. Y4 pupils experiment with ink and crayons imaginatively when they emulate the work of Catrin Williams. They link their learning well with an area of history as they adapt their skills to prepare pictures of a Roman feast.
- 213. Y5 pupils develop their skills well when they print by using a pattern on a tile. They are good at taking risks and trying out their ideas and increasing their understanding of the features of the material.
- 214. Key stage 2 pupils produce work of a high standard when they emulate Kyffin Williams' work.

**Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings.

## Physical education

**Key Stage 1: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key Stage 2: Grade 2 - Good features and no important shortcomings**

### Good features

215. Pupils at both key stages wear suitable clothes for lessons and walk to the hall or playground appropriately. They concentrate on their tasks, follow instructions, work hard, and practise their skills diligently and safely. They all understand the need to warm up their bodies before they start doing specific tasks and to cool down at the end.
216. In key stage 1, many of the pupils show good control of their bodies as they travel around the hall in different ways and when changing direction.
217. They display good standards of skills when they throw, catch and hit beanbags and balls of various sizes. They work well as a group when they solve a problem.
218. The majority of pupils in key stage 1 can express views about their work and offer sensible comments on how to improve the performance.
219. In key stage 2, the pupils practise techniques and specific skills effectively as they develop good skills when they throw, roll, catch and hit balls and when they jump and move. Pupils can work together well when they participate in short, competitive games.
220. Many Y6 pupils work well in groups to solve problems linked to their physical education work.
221. The majority of key stage 2 pupils respond well to the challenge of analysing their performance and note targets for improvement.
222. School records show that the majority of key stage 2 pupils make good progress in their swimming skills.

### Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

## **School's response to the inspection**

The school wishes to thank the Registered Inspector and his team for the courteous manner in which they undertook their duties during the inspection.

The success the school has had is evidence of the untiring dedication and activities of all the teaching and ancillary staff, the support of the members of the governing body and the parents and the diligence of the pupils.

The challenge for us as a school will be to try to maintain and further improve standards when faced with any financial cuts as a result of falling pupil numbers over the next few years.

The recommendations will be addressed in the development plan.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau
School type	Primary including Foundation Phase
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11
Address of school	Ffordd Pen y Cefn Dolgellau
Postcode	LL40 2YW
Telephone number	01341 423034

Head teacher	Mr Wil Williams
Date of appointment	20 April 2009
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Peter Jones
Registered inspector	Mr Trebor Roberts
Date of inspection	15 – 17 June 2009

## 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	8.5	21	21	20	16	20	31	31	158.5

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	8	3	10.4

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	18.2:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	-
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	1.7:1
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	21.8
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.3:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Summer 2008	82.7	89	92
Autumn 2008	83.1	87.5	91.9
Spring 2008	82	87.6	91.4

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	21%
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 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:		20		
Percentage of pupils at each level							
			D	W	1	2	3
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	13	60	27
		National	0.2	1.2	10.0	64.3	24.2
We: oracy	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	13	67	20
		National	0.2	1.3	10.3	64.6	23.5
We: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	13	60	27
		National	0.2	2.3	16.3	60.0	21.1
We: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	27	47	27
		National	0.2	2.8	20.0	65.7	11.1
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	13	73	13
		National	0.1	2.0	10.9	65.2	21.6
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	80	20
		National	0.2	1.6	8.5	66.3	23.4

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	73.3	In Wales	74.2

D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

**National Curriculum Assessment Results  
End of key stage 2:**

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008							Number of pupils in Y6		21		
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5
English	Teacher assessment	School	4						13	48	35
		National	0.2			0.5	0.6	3.1	15.6	51.3	28.5
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	9						13	52	26
		National	0.3			0.8	0.8	4.4	16.7	53.4	23.6
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	4						13	61	22
		National	0.2			0.5	0.6	2.7	14.7	51.4	29.9
Science	Teacher assessment	School	4						9	65	22
		National	0.2			0.5	0.5	1.8	11.4	53.9	31.7

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science, and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by teacher assessment		by test	
In the school	73.9	In the school	-
In Wales	68.9	In Wales	-

- D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

## Appendix 4

### Evidence base of the inspection

Four inspectors, as well as the school nominee and a peer assessor, spent the equivalent of nine and a half inspector days in the school. A team meeting was held prior to the inspection.

Inspectors visited;

- 31 lessons or part lessons;
- registration periods, services and communal worship.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and the parents before the inspection;
- senior managers, teachers and support staff, and
- the school council.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 34 responses to the parental questionnaire;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- a wide range of pupils' previous and current work, and
- samples of pupils' reports.

The team also held post-inspection meetings with the staff and the governors.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Trebor Roberts Registered Inspector	Context, Summary, Recommendations & appendices Key Questions 1, 5 and 6 Science, Information Technology and Geography
Mr John Roberts Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7
Mr Dewi Gareth Jones Team Inspector	Key Questions 4 and 7 Physical Education
Dr Prydwen Elfed - Owens Team Inspector	Key Questions 2 and 3 Welsh and Art
Mrs Elen Mary Jones	Peer assessor
Mr Wil Williams	School nominee

**Contractor:** Cwmni Cynnal  
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### Acknowledgement

The inspectors wish to express their thanks to the governors, the head teacher, staff, parents and pupils for their willing co-operation during the inspection.