



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Nebo
Nebo
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL54 6EE**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

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



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

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

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

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Ysgol Nebo is a small school, about three miles from Penygroes in Gwynedd. The vast majority of pupils come from the village itself. The area is rural and Welsh. Fifty-four per cent of the children come from Welsh homes. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Welsh is the school's main language. The school admits pupils in the September following their third birthday. At present, there are 28 pupils on roll, including two nursery children who attend for two hours in the mornings. Seven point seven per cent (7.7%) of pupils receive free school meals, which is considerably lower than the county and national average figures.

Two full-time teachers and two part-time teachers teach the pupils. At present, nine pupils (31%) are on the special needs register.

There has been a change in the school's management staff since the last inspection. The headteacher was operating as the headteacher in charge for three years before she was appointed to the post in September 2011.

The individual school budget per pupil in 2011-2012 for Ysgol Nebo is £4,757. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Gwynedd is £7,732 and the minimum is £2,745. Ysgol Nebo is 18th out of 102 primary schools in Gwynedd in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

Ysgol Nebo's current performance is good because:

- there is a clear pattern of improvement in the Foundation Phase in pupils' achievement over the last three years;
- nearly all pupils are making good progress in literacy skills;
- the standard of teaching is consistently good and effective use is made of assistants to support learning;
- the school provides broad and valuable experiences in order to capture pupils' interest;
- the school is a happy, caring community that promotes aspects of pupils' wellbeing well; and
- the pupil's voice has a prominent place in school life.

However:

- more able and talented pupils are not challenged sufficiently in order to achieve as well as they should; and
- the learning experiences do not give sufficient opportunities to develop numeracy skills and extended writing across the curriculum.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is shared with all the school's stakeholders;
- there has been significant progress in pupils' outcomes over a period of the last three years; and
- the improvement strategies that have been produced by the headteacher are beginning to have an effect on pupils' achievement.

However:

- the school does not use the evidence from self-evaluation thoroughly enough to set challenging and specific targets for improvement; and
- the targets are not quantitative enough and, as a result, it is not easy for the governors to review progress.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 improve pupils' achievements at the higher levels in both key stages;
- R2 ensure consistent provision for numeracy across the curriculum;
- R3 provide opportunities to write at length in both languages across a range of subjects;
- R4 ensure that the school's self-evaluation is more evaluative in order to refine the priorities of the school development plan; and
- R5 develop the role of the governors as 'critical friends'.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. Progress against the recommendations will be monitored by the local authority.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All pupils across the school are making good progress in their learning.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils develop into independent and confident learners. Nearly all pupils are making good progress in literacy skills. Most pupils have good oral language and they communicate confidently in Welsh. Most pupils are reading books that are appropriate to their age and ability with a firm understanding of vocabulary and context. Most pupils can discuss the content in some detail.

Many pupils in the Foundation Phase are making appropriate progress in their ability to write independently. They are starting to use Welsh words and phrases in their work. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils can write a progression of sentences independently, showing understanding of basic punctuation. However, more able children are not making sufficient progress in terms of writing freely and at length.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in their literacy skills in both languages. Most pupils are developing into confident readers in both languages, reading meaningfully and with expression. They can express an opinion, predict and talk about their favourite books using natural oral language. The higher reading skills of most pupils are developing well in both languages as they research specific information. Pupils that receive additional reading support are making good progress.

Key stage 2 pupils write in a variety of forms with confidence and accuracy. The majority have a firm grasp of syntax in Welsh and English. Overall, they use correct punctuation, organise their work into paragraphs and develop their work for different audiences effectively. However, key stage 2 pupils do not make enough use of re-drafting in order to improve their first attempts. The ability to write at length has not been fully developed across a range of subjects.

As there are small numbers in the cohorts at the end of key stages, care is needed when responding to the school's performance data at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.

In the Foundation Phase, there is a clear pattern of improvement in pupils' achievement over the last three years. Seven-year-old pupils' results in 2011 show that the school is performing at a higher level than the family of similar schools average in a combination of Welsh, mathematics and science. Over the last two years, pupils' performance has been higher than the family's averages in mathematics and higher than the family's averages in science over three of the last four years.

When comparing achievements at the end of key stage 1 with those of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' achievement has varied from the top 25% to the bottom 25% in Welsh, mathematics and science over the four years.

Pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 2 in a combination of Welsh or English, mathematics and science have been higher than the averages for the family and Wales in two of the last four years. Pupils' achievements in mathematics and science have been lower than the averages for the family and Wales in three of the last four years.

When comparing achievements at the end of key stage 2 with those of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' achievements have varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% over a period of five years. Over a period of time, there is no obvious pattern between the achievements of boys and girls, nor in the achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils feel safe at school and they have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit.

The behaviour of all pupils in lessons and around the school is very good, and almost all show interest in their work and concentrate appropriately on their tasks. The majority of the school's oldest pupils have the necessary skills to help them to improve their own learning. The school's atmosphere and ethos promote respect towards others. All of the school's pupils are courteous and polite, show respect and care for their peers, and work conscientiously with one another.

Most pupils express opinions effectively and contribute appropriately towards the school's activities. Through the school council, the green group, questionnaires and class discussions, the pupil's voice has a prominent place in the school's procedures.

All pupils have mature attitudes that are a good basis for developing their social and life skills. Through the 'O'r Pridd' initiative, pupils' social and life skills are fostered and developed well. They develop their confidence by taking part in a number of activities in the community such as welcoming elderly people of the area to the school regularly.

The school's attendance percentage has been in the top 25% in comparison with that of similar schools in three of the last four years.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Adequate

The school has appropriate schemes of work in place. It provides various experiences that capture pupils' interest across the school. Educational visits and activities outside the classroom are organised, which contribute to pupils' personal development. The use made of the local area to enrich the experiences of pupils of all ages is a strength.

The purposeful planning sets clear objectives for developing literacy, numeracy and information technology. However, learning experiences do not provide enough opportunities to develop numeracy and extended writing skills across the curriculum. Teachers target individuals who need additional support successfully and this has a positive effect on the achievement of these pupils. However, more able and talented pupils are not being challenged sufficiently for them to achieve as well as they should.

Provision for developing the Welsh language is good and the assistants offer good linguistic models. The Welsh dimension is receiving due attention in the school's work and pupils have consistent opportunities to work with artists, literary figures and local poets.

The school's commitment to the principles of Fair Trade, Eco School and the Green School has a positive impact on pupils' awareness of global citizenship and developments in sustainability. The 'O'r Pridd' initiative gives rich practical experiences of sustainability to pupils.

Teaching: Good

Teachers have a firm understanding of the curriculum. They build on pupils' previous experiences and use a variety of teaching styles to promote effective learning. Teachers ensure that learning outcomes are clear and are shared regularly with pupils during the lesson. Interesting and stimulating activities are planned and resources are used well to reinforce learning.

A supportive and active atmosphere exists in the classes. Teachers have an understanding of individuals' and groups' learning needs and they co-operate effectively with assistants to support teaching. Classroom management is good in both key stages, and a high element of respect exists between adults and pupils.

Assessment for learning principles are in place and are beginning to have a positive effect on learning. Work in books is marked regularly with comments offering suggestions for improvement. However, the opportunities for pupils to respond to them are scarce. As a result, it does not enable pupils to improve and develop their work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The inclusive ethos and the numerous experiences all promote spiritual, moral and cultural personal development successfully. Courtesy and respect are prominent qualities in the school and they are fostered daily in the morning assemblies and in circle time. Pupils' behaviour is very good on all occasions and the weekly 'Bwrdd Cinio Aur' (Golden Dinner Table) is a popular initiative that is used to reward pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is appropriate. The school identifies pupils' needs very quickly and follows the appropriate steps for providing the support that is needed. The school makes good use of specialist services in

order to identify and support pupils' needs. Appropriate, useful records are kept and individual education plans are reviewed regularly and parents have an active role in the process.

The school has effective procedures to ensure that parents contact the school promptly about their child's absence.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community with a caring family ethos. By providing work on global citizenship, the school stimulates empathy and a feeling of equality towards diversity. All pupils are respected as individuals and have full and equal access to all of the school's activities.

The condition of the building is appropriate and offers classes and facilities that are appropriate to the number of pupils. The school makes effective use of resources. There are stimulating and motivational displays that support teaching and learning.

The building and grounds are used well in order to enrich learning and teaching. The school has a purpose-built garden that has been created to support the 'O'r Pridd' initiative. Effective use is made of the outdoor area in order to respond to the principles of the Foundation Phase.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and conveys that vision successfully to staff, governors and pupils. She has a good knowledge of the school and offers a firm strategic direction for the life and work of the school.

Following a period of uncertainty and change in the school's staffing, the school succeeded in a short time in implementing strategies that are starting to have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes and standards. All of the school's staff have clear job descriptions and they have a firm understanding of their role and responsibilities. The teachers' continuous professional development is supported effectively through the school's performance management system.

The governors have a good awareness of school life. They are very supportive and develop their duties appropriately. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and they are aware of some aspects of the curriculum that need to be developed. Although they have some understanding of data, the governors' role as critical friends has not been developed sufficiently to challenge the school about standards.

The school succeeds in responding to national and local priorities. It has addressed some of the aspects of the School Effectiveness Framework by establishing professional learning communities with schools in the catchment area and the local secondary school. The principles of the Foundation Phase offer stimulating experiences for pupils at the school.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has an appropriate self-evaluation report that reflects a clear and accurate picture of the school. The school includes the opinions of staff, governors, parents and pupils very effectively.

Self-evaluation is an important part of school life, and is a process that involves analysis of data, observation of lessons and evaluating pupils' work. The school has started to include teaching staff and governors in this process. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities. However, the school does not use the evidence from self-evaluation thoroughly enough to set challenging and specific targets for improvement. The targets are not sufficiently quantitative and, as a result, it is not easy for governors to review the progress.

The school is part of a number of professional learning communities with local schools that work on aspects of assessment for learning and improving boys' written work in English. These networks are starting to influence the provision and pupils' achievement positively.

The school has responded well to the recommendations of the last inspection.

Partnership working: Good

The school has very positive links with parents and carers, and all are supportive of the work of the school.

The school has strong links with the local secondary school and the other primary schools that feed it. There is an effective transition scheme between the school and the local secondary school. The school has begun to co-operate with teachers from the local secondary school on the task of moderating pupils' work.

The school is an integral part of the local community. Members of the community are invited to the school regularly to talk to pupils and to take part in thanksgiving, Christmas and St. David's Day celebrations. The gardening club, with the support of the school's parents, sells vegetables to members of the community in the summer term. This is a strong element of the school's partnerships with the community.

The school co-operates effectively with Coleg Menai and admits students on learning, care and child development courses. The relationship and co-operation are effective between the school and special education services, educational psychologists, children's specialist services and welfare officers. This meets the needs of a specific cohort of pupils effectively.

The school also co-operates well with a nearby school to share resources and to ensure value for money, such as sharing a bus to go to swimming lessons, and jointly hiring an outdoor centre.

Resource management: Good

The school is staffed appropriately to teach pupils and effective use is made of the staff's time and expertise. Teachers and assistants work together well as a team. The ancillary staff are a strength at the school and they have an impact on pupils' achievement.

Teachers use planning, preparation and assessment time effectively and the school meets the statutory requirements on teachers' work load.

The school has a good supply of resources that are managed appropriately. The headteacher and governors monitor the budget regularly. The school's buildings and grounds are managed and maintained well.

The school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Care is needed when analysing data in schools when cohorts of pupils are small at the end of a key stage.

In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who achieve level 2 in the core subject indicator (namely a combination of Welsh, mathematics and science) is higher than the averages for the family and Wales in two of the last four years. The proportion of pupils who achieve level 2 in Welsh, mathematics and science individually is higher than the averages for the family and Wales in three of the last four years.

The percentage of pupils that achieve level 3 and higher in Welsh is higher than the averages for the family and the school in three of the last four years. However, no pupils have reached level 3 and higher in mathematics or science during the last four years.

When comparing achievements at the end of key stage 1 with those of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' achievement has varied from the top 25% to the bottom 25% in Welsh, mathematics and science over the last four years.

Pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 2 in the core subject indicator, (that is, a combination of Welsh or English, mathematics or science) have been higher than the averages for the family and Wales in two of the last four years. Pupils' achievements in mathematics and science have been lower than the averages for the family and Wales in three of the last four years.

No pupils have achieved level 5 and higher in Welsh, English, mathematics and science over the last four years.

When comparing achievements at the end of key stage 2 with those of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' achievement has varied from the top 25% to the bottom 25% in Welsh. Pupils' achievement over the last four years has varied from the upper 50% to the bottom 25% in mathematics while pupils' achievement has varied from the lower 50% to the bottom 25% in science.

There are no obvious trends between the performance of boys and girls nor between pupils who are entitled to free school meals and the remainder of the cohort.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

The 17 responses received from pupils are very positive.

All are of the opinion:

- that they feel safe at school;
- that the school deals well with any bullying;
- that they know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious;
- that the school teaches them how to keep health and that there are many opportunities at the school to take regular physical exercise;
- that they are doing well at school and teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress;
- that they know what to do and to whom to speak if they find the work difficult;
- that homework helps them to understand and improve their work at school;
- that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work;
- that other children behave well and that they can do their work; and
- that all the children behave well at play time and lunch time.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fourteen responses were received from the parents to the questionnaires.

All agreed or strongly agreed:

- that they are satisfied with the school generally;
- that their child likes school;
- that their child received support to settle in well on starting at the school and that their child is making good progress;
- that pupils behave well at school and that their child is safe at school;
- that teaching is good and that staff expect their child to work hard and do his/her best;
- that homework that is given builds well on what their child is learning at school;
- that staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- that their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise;
- that their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs;
- that they have consistent information on their child's progress;
- that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints and that they feel comfortable in asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem;
- that the school helps their child to become more mature and shoulder responsibility and
- that their child is prepared well for moving on to the next school, college or work;
- that there is a good variety of activities including trips or visits; and
- that the school is well run.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Anwen Griffith	Reporting Inspector
Michael Hayes	Team Inspector
Alan Parry	Lay Inspector
Eleri Edwards	Peer Inspector
Bethan Hughes	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority. If it is available, the data report can be seen on our website alongside this report.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, 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

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.