



*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**

**Gyffin Education Centre  
Maes y Llan  
Gyffin  
Conwy  
LL32 8NB**

**Date of inspection: January 2013**

**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:

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

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

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**Publication date: 4 April 2013**

## Context

The pupil referral unit's (PRU's) mission is to 'plan to ensure that the basic skills, confidence and self-esteem of all learners are energetically addressed and monitored throughout their time at Gyffin'.

Gyffin PRU offers educational packages to key stage 2 pupils who cannot access a mainstream school and have:

- been permanently excluded due to challenging behaviour;
- behaviour that leads to difficulties maintaining their school place;
- emotional issues resulting in difficulties accessing mainstream education; and
- medical issues.

There is a teacher-in-charge, two full time and one part time teacher and three teaching assistants.

There are 13 pupils on the register, almost all of whom are boys. Almost two thirds of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority. All pupils are at school action plus for special educational needs in their schools before being admitted to Gyffin.

Most pupils the recommended 23.5 hours of education. The PRU aims to ensure that extremely vulnerable and challenging pupils who are not able to reintegrate into mainstream education or into full-time at Gyffin still have the opportunity to access alternative educational packages. They do this by using individually designed part-time placements at Gyffin, with the over-riding aim being to build up to full-time attendance as soon as they are able to do so.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the PRU with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups over time because of the nature of the pupils' learning needs.

## Summary

<b>The PRU's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The PRU's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

Gyffin PRU's strengths are that:

- staff provide a warm, nurturing environment and an appropriate curriculum;
- teaching has many strengths;
- two-thirds of pupils return to mainstream schools and maintain their places;
- most pupils behave well in lessons;
- care, support and guidance are good; and
- there is effective partnership working and the PRU is well resourced.

However, the performance of Gyffin PRU is judged as adequate because:

- although reducing, exclusions are too high;
- the reduced timetable for a few pupils does not allow them to make as much progress as they should do;
- pupils' progress is not good enough in literacy and numeracy and writing is unsatisfactory; and
- there are shortcomings in assessment and the planning for the development of skills.

### Prospects for improvement

The recently appointed teacher-in-charge is well placed to make the changes necessary to improve the PRU's performance. Staff share his vision for improvement. Recent improvements include the:

- PRU's appropriate emphasis on returning pupils to their schools;
- improvement in attendance last term;
- reduction in the very high exclusion rate;
- new resources to deal with pupils with more complex needs;
- introduction of a performance management system and the observation of lessons; and
- inclusion of data in management reports from the PRU to the management committee.

However, prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because:

- these improvements are very recent;
- targets in performance management are not yet sufficiently challenging and do not focus on raising pupils' standards;
- there is not enough emphasis on the systematic development of pupils' skills

across the PRU;

- the management committee does not provide enough challenge; and
- self-evaluation and the development plan have missed important areas for improvement.

## Recommendations

R1 Improve the planning for skills across the PRU

R2 Continue to reduce exclusions

R3 Address the shortcomings in assessment and make better use of assessment information to plan work

R4 Increase the hours for pupils with reduced timetables

R5 Improve target setting in performance management to be more challenging and focus on raising standards

R6 Improve self-evaluation

R7 Provide more challenge from the management committee

### What happens next?

The PRU will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the PRU's progress.

## Main findings

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

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

Pupils have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They arrive at the PRU with very little confidence as learners, find it difficult to relate to others and are unable to manage their behaviour well. Many have a history of poor attendance. Over time, many make good progress towards meeting their individual learning targets.

Two-thirds of pupils gain the skills and confidence that they need in order to return to their mainstream schools successfully. Last year five pupils returned to mainstream schools and have maintained their places.

Where standards are good in lessons, most pupils show good recall of previous learning and remain on task. They respond well to questioning and are proud of their achievements. A few pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well for research and to make short films. However, pupils do not develop their ICT skills well enough to record and present information or work use ICT enough to present and record their work. They work well in groups and co-operate with each other. In one-to-one literacy lessons they make good progress in reading and phonics. They listen carefully and respond well to stories. Where standards are only adequate, pupils do not remain on task throughout the lesson or complete their work.

However, pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy skills is not good enough. They do not make enough progress over time. Standards in writing are unsatisfactory.

A few pupils do not attend the PRU full-time and have a reduced timetable. Their reduced hours range from just over 19 to just over 16 hours a week. This makes it difficult for these pupils to make enough progress.

All pupils have Welsh on their timetables. They develop a strong sense of Welsh culture and use and understand incidental Welsh well.

#### Wellbeing: Adequate

Almost all pupils feel safe in school, enjoy their lessons and recognise the good support that they receive from staff. They have a strong sense of belonging to the PRU and appreciate the welcoming and caring ethos. For example, their day in the PRU begins with breakfast with the staff and a story. They take part in a wide range of experiences designed to widen their horizons and improve how they work with others. These include a residential week, visits to places of interest such as the Great Orme and the fire station, planning and working in the PRU's garden and fostering guinea pigs.

They gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Pupils enjoy developing their cookery skills and making choices about their diet. There are good

examples of pupils who have become significantly healthier due to the close co-operation between PRU staff and parents or carers.

Most pupils improve how they relate to others over time, helped by targeted work with the school counsellor and other professionals and the very positive interactions with staff. They learn to take turn, listen and value others' opinions. They make good use of a 'friendship room', which they have designed and decorated. Pupils use this comfortable room to reflect on and discuss behaviour and issues of concern and so avoid further conflict.

Overall pupil attendance is 73% but improved to 89% during the most recent term. There are a few pupils whose attendance has significantly increased since they joined the PRU.

During the inspection pupils behaved well. Most pupils are generally well motivated by a carefully structured reward system in which they can earn appealing prizes. They benefit from regular plenary sessions with all staff and pupils. In these sessions, staff make sure that pupils understand exactly why they have earned or not earned their tokens. However, in the questionnaires and in discussion, pupils perceive that behaviour by a few pupils, in the PRU's lessons and around the school, is not good. The number of exclusions is still too high, despite a term by term reduction over the last year. Last term, half of all the pupils were excluded at least once. Since September 2012, there have been 31 exclusions, most of these involving three individual pupils. A significant minority of pupils do not improve their behaviour over time.

A school council has recently been elected and has held its first meeting. Pupils take part in a wide range of decisions about the life of the PRU and support for the community. They planned the PRU's garden, hosted a Jubilee party and organised a Christmas fair. They regularly raise money for a charity of their choice. However, pupils are not involved in decisions about teaching and learning.

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

The PRU provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that includes all core and foundation subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about topics in history, geography and RE and to develop good practical and social skills in lessons such as drama, PE and outdoor education. Programmes to help pupils make the transition back to mainstream school are well planned and generally effective.

Most pupils receive the recommended 23.5 hours education each week, either at the PRU or shared with a mainstream school. However, a minority of pupils receive fewer hours than this at present, because they are considered to be unable to cope with full-time provision on account of their severe and complex emotional and behavioural needs. There are written plans to increase provision for these pupils as soon as possible.

There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to develop skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils benefit from the newly introduced programme for individual literacy

and numeracy support. However, they do not have regular, planned opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons. As a result there are some shortcomings in standards, particularly in writing. There is good provision for pupils to develop and apply ICT skills, for example to record and present their work. The PRU provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of Welsh culture and language.

The success of the PRU in promoting pupils' understanding of sustainable development has been recognised in the achievement of the Eco-schools silver award. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn about life in other countries and cultures in geography and RE.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Teaching has many strengths. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to create a warm and welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and valued. Where teaching is good, teachers plan work to meet pupils' abilities. They recap on previous learning. They set a lively pace with short bursts of activity and use a wide range of resources to hold pupils' interest. They give pupils clear explanations and make good use of questioning to check their understanding. They use ICT, such as tablets and whiteboards, very well to motivate and engage pupils in their lessons. They use activities such as drama to develop pupils' social and communication skills.

However, in a few lessons, teachers do not always check how well pupils have remembered previous learning or plan well enough to make sure that all pupils can access the work at the right level for them. Pupils do not all have enough opportunities to learn how to work co-operatively or independently.

Although pupils receive a valuable programme of one-to one support for literacy, this particular work is not followed up in lessons. Teachers help pupils with their literacy and numeracy skills as and when they need them. They do not focus enough on the systematic development of these skills in their planning. There are not enough structured opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills.

During the inspection, teachers and teaching assistants managed behaviour well across the PRU. They use the reward scheme consistently and make sure that pupils understand how well they have behaved during the school day. However, the number of exclusions is too high and teachers do not manage the few pupils with the most challenging behaviour as well as they could do.

The results of the recently introduced baseline assessments of literacy and numeracy are not as well used as they could be to inform planning, tracking and evaluation of progress. Scores are included in just over half of the reports for reviews, and not in IEPs. This makes it difficult to measure progress.

Overall assessment of, and planning for, behavioural needs is well developed. However, individual lesson planning does not link carefully enough to the particular behaviours that pupils need to practise in order to make progress and achieve the targets in their individual education plans. Marking is of variable quality and too generous at times with regard to the quality of work.



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

The provision for care, support and guidance has many strengths, and is effective in promoting pupils' health and wellbeing. The PRU staff work closely with parents and carers wherever possible in order to understand the individual needs and circumstances of each pupil. As a result, almost all pupils receive very good care and support that is tailored to their individual needs.

Pupils have good opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, both in planned activities and in personal advice and support. There are appropriate policies and procedures to promote positive behaviour and to prevent bullying. However, the PRU has yet to develop strategies to manage the few pupils who have the most complex needs and the most challenging behaviour, without needing to resort to exclusion.

Pupils benefit from regular support from specialist services such as an educational psychologist, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and a curriculum inclusion teacher. The PRU works appropriately in partnership with parents, social workers and education welfare officers to help the minority of pupils whose attendance is poor.

The PRU's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Provision for pupils who have additional learning needs, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and those who are looked after children, is good. The appointment of a part-time Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) in September 2012 has enabled the PRU to meet the increasingly complex needs of pupils.

All pupils with SEN receive appropriate support for their learning and behavioural needs. Pupils now receive good quality individual support, through well-structured phonic teaching programmes, for general and specific learning difficulties. Individual education and behaviour plans contain clear, specific targets for improvement in literacy, numeracy or behaviour according to needs.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The PRU welcomes and includes boys and girls with a wide range of individual needs. Through careful individual planning and appropriate support, the PRU enables pupils to participate in all activities. Pupils are taught about other cultures and religions and are consistently encouraged to respect others. The PRU is located in a building that is in generally good condition and large enough for the number on roll. Classrooms are attractive, well furnished and well equipped. There have been a number of recent improvements in accommodation and resources that are already having a positive impact on pupils' progress. These include the 'friendship room', the outdoor area, good quality ICT equipment and resources to support additional learning needs. However, some teaching areas are too small or poorly located, and the premises are not accessible to wheelchair users. The PRU is working with the local authority to remedy these issues.

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

The PRU has recently appointed a new teacher-in-charge. He has set clear vision for the PRU which places appropriate emphasis on the reintegration of pupils back into mainstream schools. This vision is fully shared by staff and supported by many of the policies and plans. However, this new direction is at an early stage of development and therefore it is too early to judge the impact.

Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood by all staff. The teacher-in-charge makes sure that all staff focus on and are involved in discussions and plans for school improvement.

Performance management processes are now in place for all staff and in most cases individual targets relate well to whole school priorities. However, targets are not sufficiently challenging or linked to improving standards for pupils. The PRU has yet to focus on the systematic development of literacy and numeracy skills.

The Management Committee supports the teacher-in-charge well by providing additional staff and resources. It receives regular reports about the work of the PRU. These reports now include useful data, for example on attendance, exclusions and literacy scores. With the introduction of data reports, the Management Committee is now in a position to provide more challenge to raise standards.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Self-evaluation is still in the early stages of development. The teacher-in-charge has started to establish formal systems of data collection and lesson observations. However, processes to identify priorities for improvement are not yet systematic or embedded firmly enough. As a result, the teacher-in-charge and the Management Committee do not have an accurate assessment of the PRU's strengths and weaknesses. This is evident in the self-evaluation report, which is too positive when judging the quality of the PRU's work.

The school development plan identifies important areas for improvement such as literacy and numeracy. However, targets are not always specific and measurable and do not focus enough on pupils' standards. Important areas identified for improvement in the self-evaluation report, such as thinking skills, professional networks and personalised curriculum planning, are not picked up in the school development plan. As a result, these important areas for improvement are missed.

The views of staff were actively sought as part of the self-evaluation process. The PRU has started to consult with pupils, parents and carers and other agencies.

There is an appropriate focus on improving support for literacy, numeracy and managing behaviour. However, staff do not receive enough training on curriculum matters and how to improve pupils' skills.

Networks of professional practice have recently been improved. Better links with other schools have led to the development of standardised literacy and numeracy assessments.

The PRU has made good progress towards nearly all the recommendations made in the previous inspection. However, they have not addressed the recommendation to improve self-evaluation.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The PRU works effectively with a range of partners, including parents and carers, mainstream schools, community groups and staff in the local authority's social inclusion service. As a result, pupils benefit from better opportunities for learning in the community and for transition back to mainstream school. The close and supportive partnership between the PRU and the local authority's social inclusion service has enabled the PRU to respond to the needs of more complex pupils by improving staffing, resources and accommodation. However, the PRU does not have access to a school improvement advisor to provide staff with support and challenge, for example to develop teaching, assessment, curriculum and management systems.

### **Resource management: Good**

The PRU manages its staff and finances effectively. Learning resources are good and relevant to the pupils needs. The PRU has appropriate levels of ICT, which pupils use to research and develop their number skills.

The learning environment is used well, making the best use of space and facilities available. The deployment of staff is effective in delivering the curriculum.

Staff have access to a wide range of appropriate training from the social inclusion service and on external courses. However, they do not have enough access to the school improvement service to support curriculum matters.

As a result of the recent appointment of additional staff, teachers now receive sufficient time for planning, preparation and assessment.

The PRU provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Six parents or carers responded to the questionnaire. All are satisfied with the PRU and say that their child was helped to settle in and likes being there. All feel that their child is encouraged to do his or her best and is treated with respect, and that the teaching is good. All agree that their child is safe in school and that they are comfortable approaching the PRU if there is an issue. Almost all feel that their child makes progress, learns to be more mature, gets support with additional learning needs and takes enough exercise. However, just under half do not feel that they know how to make a complaint. A few parents do not believe that behaviour is good.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Ten pupils responded to the questionnaire. All learners feel that the PRU deals well with bullying and that teachers help them to make progress and they have enough books and equipment. Almost all learners feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they are worried or if they find the work hard. They agree that the PRU helps them learn how to be healthy and gives them opportunities to take exercise. Most learners believe that they are doing well. However, most learners consider that other pupils' behaviour distracts them from their work and almost half feel that pupils do not behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Claire Yardley	Reporting Inspector
Sue Willan	Team Inspector
James Kerry Jones	Lay Inspector
Matthew Burns	Peer Inspector
Mark Peters	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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 ALN terms

**ADHD:** attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

**ALN:** additional learning needs

**ASD:** Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

**ATR:** additional teacher resource

**BESD, ESBD or SEBD:** Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

**CoP:** Code of Practice

**HI:** hearing impairment

**MSI:** multi-sensory impairment

**PMLD:** profound and multiple learning difficulties

**SpLD:** specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

**VI:** visual impairment