



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

**Puncheston School
Puncheston
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 5RL**

Date of inspection: February 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:

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English)

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Publication date: 25/04/2013

Context

This rural school is situated on the outskirts of the village of Puncheston at the foot of the Preseli mountains in Pembrokeshire. According to the school, the area is one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is considerably lower than the county and national figure.

There are sixty six pupils aged between four and 11 on roll. Numbers have remained stable over the last three years. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes by three full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. Twenty-four per cent of pupils have additional learning needs, which is a little above the national figure. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Welsh is the main language of the home of 20% of pupils. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds at the school at present.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2009.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Casmael in 2012-2013 is £4,203. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Pembrokeshire is £5,870 and the minimum is £3,138. Ysgol Casmael is in the ninth position out of the 61 primary schools in Pembrokeshire in terms of the school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make appropriate progress during their period at the school;
- teaching is of a good standard in all classes;
- standards of pupils' behaviour and commitment are very good;
- the school offers a wide range of rich experiences that stimulate learning; and
- the school is a happy and caring community and has a welcoming ethos.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a strong vision with a specific focus on raising standards and continuous improvement;
- all staff share the same values and work effectively as a team;
- there is a clear link between the self-evaluation process and the priorities of the school development plan;
- there is evidence of planning and implementing improvements successfully; and
- the close co-operation with the governing body, parents and other partners has a constructive influence on the school's work.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen pupils' Welsh oral and reading skills at the end of the Foundation Phase
- R2 Continue to extend pupils to achieve the higher levels at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2
- R3 Ensure further consistency in the marking to assist pupils improve the standard of their work
- R4 Plan and expand further the learning experiences that are organised in the Foundation Phase's outdoor area

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Across the school, pupils' listening skills are very good. In the Foundation Phase, a few pupils communicate freely in Welsh when discussing their work and also informally in various situations. The majority lack confidence and have a limited range of vocabulary to assist them to discuss and respond to questions fully. In key stage 2, most pupils communicate clearly and confidently in Welsh and English and are very prepared to offer answers and share ideas.

In the Foundation Phase, the majority of pupils read simple texts at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability. A minority of pupils do not read with enough fluency and understanding. In key stage 2, most pupils read meaningfully and they use appropriate expression when reading aloud in Welsh and English. The majority discuss the content of their books intelligently and can offer personal responses to what they read.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils write independently, and they begin to vary their sentences and use basic punctuation accurately. In key stage 2, pupils write in a variety of forms in Welsh and English and have a sound grasp of different forms of writing. Their punctuation and spelling skills develop appropriately. Most pupils use their writing skills effectively in other subjects. However, examples of extended writing are more uneven across the subjects.

Across the school, but especially in key stage 2, the majority of pupils use their thinking skills and their research skills purposefully in their work across the subjects. All pupils work together well and respond enthusiastically to the tasks that are presented to them.

Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress and achieve their targets.

Results of teachers' assessments must be treated with care because the small numbers of pupils in a year and the high percentage of pupils who have additional learning needs can have a considerable effect on the school's performance from one year to the next.

In 2012, the percentage of seven-year-old pupils who achieved the expected outcome, namely outcome 5 or better, across the learning areas, is a little higher than the average for the family of similar schools. In comparison with similar schools across Wales in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the results place the school among the bottom 25% in all areas.

Over a period of four years, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher in a combination of Welsh or English, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 2 is similar or higher than the family of similar schools. The results in individual

subjects are more uneven. In comparison with similar schools across Wales in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals, the school's performance places it among the top 25% in most years.

In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved outcome 6 at the end of the Foundation Phase and level 5 at the end of key stage 2 is uneven but generally lower than the family of schools' averages.

Considering the nature of groups, there is no consistent pattern in the difference between the results of boys and girls, although boys achieve better on the whole.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of the need to eat healthy food and to keep fit. They enjoy the life and work of the school and feel safe there. They take pride in their school.

All pupils are courteous and considerate, behave very well and respect each other and adults. They apply themselves enthusiastically to their tasks and persevere for extended periods.

Pupils' attendance over the last three years has varied between the bottom 50% and the top 25% in comparison with similar schools. Attendance levels have risen consistently since 2009 to over 95%, which is higher than the national averages.

Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and co-operate effectively. They contribute to the life of the school by taking a prominent role in a variety of activities, collecting pupils' ideas and seeking a response. They regularly submit a detailed report of their work to the governors, which is developing their confidence to contribute to decisions about school activities.

All pupils develop good social and personal skills through the school's daily programme and through taking part in concerts and community activities.

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

The school provides a range of interesting experiences that meets the needs of most pupils. Activities meet the statutory requirements of the Foundation Phase, the national curriculum and religious education. Themes are used effectively to develop a number of skills and to present aspects of the curriculum. Educational visits and a wide range of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' experiences and promote their personal and social development.

Detailed planning ensures that pupils acquire thinking, communication, number and information and communication technology skills, which enables them to access the wide curriculum. The emphasis on developing pupils' Welsh literacy skills across the school impacts increasingly on standards. In the Foundation Phase, however, aspects of the organisation to promote pupils' oral and reading skills are more uneven.

The Welsh dimension has been integrated successfully into aspects of the curriculum and develops pupils' knowledge and awareness of their local area and of Wales effectively. The rich provision to extend pupils' knowledge of the work of Welsh artists deepens their understanding of aspects of their country's history, literature and the arts. The school's art gallery is a focus for cultural activities at the school and in the village.

There is appropriate provision for developing pupils' awareness of sustainable development and the importance of caring for the environment. Their understanding of global citizenship is promoted increasingly through the curriculum and through the links that are developing with schools in other countries.

Teaching: Good

The standard of teaching is consistently good across the school. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and they make skilful use of a range of teaching methods and appropriate resources that ensure pupils' active involvement in their learning. Tasks are planned appropriately to meet pupils' current needs. The challenging tasks that are provided in subjects such as mathematics and history in key stage 2 offer an effective approach to extending more able pupils further across the school.

The warm working relationship between teachers and pupils promotes appropriate interaction and gives pupils confidence to work independently. Support staff are used productively in classrooms and in a range of other activities across the school.

Appropriate assessment procedures are in place, including a whole school system to track pupils' progress. Suitable use is made of the data that is produced to monitor pupils' progress and to provide additional learning programmes as required.

A range of assessment for learning strategies has been established across the school and they offer pupils good opportunities to assess their work and the work of their peers. This contributes very effectively towards creating more independent learners.

Pupils' work is marked regularly. Constructive comments are offered but they do not always assist pupils to know how to improve the standard of their work. Reports for parents provide detailed information about their children's achievements and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and orderly community where everyone feels that they are appreciated. The advantages of living healthily are promoted effectively across the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.

The general provision for promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. A personal and social education programme is planned carefully and included across the curriculum. Collective worship sessions contribute constructively to these areas.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding and they are not a cause for concern. There is clear guidance for all members of staff and they are aware of the requirements.

Pupils who have additional learning needs are identified early and appropriate intervention programmes are provided for those who need specific support. Individual education plans set attainable targets and have a positive effect on pupils' development. They are evaluated and updated in consultation with pupils and parents. The school has positive partnerships with specialist external agencies, such as learning support officers, which ensure effective support for pupils.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a happy and welcoming community and there is a warm atmosphere among staff and pupils. The inclusive ethos promotes equal opportunities and appreciates diversity. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils and appropriate procedures ensure very good behaviour across the school.

The physical environment is of a good standard. The building provides enough room and appropriate facilities that are used fully to support pupils' learning. Displays in classrooms and across the school create a colourful and interesting environment. The buildings and the site are well-maintained.

Resources are of good quality and match pupils' needs effectively. They are used purposefully to promote learning.

The school is situated on a pleasant site and the outside areas are used for a range of activities. Full use is not made of the Foundation Phase's outdoor area to extend pupils' learning and play experiences.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision which is based on ensuring high standards. She conveys that vision to staff, pupils, parents and governors successfully. The school is an orderly community and all staff co-operate effectively as a team. There is a strong sense of a common purpose where pupils are central to all the decisions that are made.

The strategies that have been introduced in terms of planning and developing the curriculum are moving the school forward. They include a firm focus on promoting pupils' learning skills in different contexts across the curriculum.

The governing body is very supportive and co-operates effectively with the headteacher to implement the school development plan. Members discuss data regularly and understand any trends in performance. Visits to the school, lesson observations and reports that are received about aspects of provision enable them to operate effectively as critical friends.

Appropriate attention is paid to national and local priorities. Literacy and numeracy skills have been targeted and this is having a positive effect on pupils' outcomes and standards. Assessment for learning has been embedded fully in lessons and contributes effectively to raising standards.

Improving quality: Good

The school makes effective use of a range of sources to evaluate its performance by considering the views of pupils, parents, staff, governors and the local authority. The self-evaluation report provides a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas that need to be developed.

A range of effective monitoring activities are in place and they include a thorough analysis of performance data, monitoring educational provision and reviewing various aspects of learning areas. The information that is collected from self-evaluation is used effectively to develop and prioritise improvement plans.

The school has established effective networks of professional practice with other schools and partners. Opportunities to plan jointly and share good practice enrich provision. Staff benefit from opportunities to contribute to curricular developments locally such as promoting children's personal values.

Professional learning communities have been established at the school and focus appropriately on developing aspects such as pupils' writing skills and promoting problem-solving skills. The impact of the work can be seen in the development in pupils' writing and mental arithmetic skills.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners. Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools contribute positively towards realising the school's aims. There are beneficial links with local businesses and higher education institutions.

There is a strong partnership with the local community. Pupils visit various places in the village regularly and welcome individuals from the community to contribute to their theme work. These links enrich their learning experiences and their awareness of their locality. As a community school, its facilities are used fully by groups and local organisations. Constructive use is made of the support of individuals from the community to promote pupils' reading skills and to help with a range of extra-curricular activities.

The school co-operates closely with other schools in the cluster in order to expand pupils' learning experiences and to share good practice. Transition activities have been established effectively with secondary schools and they address the curriculum and pupils' wellbeing. Procedures for moderating and standardising pupils' work are in place. The school co-operates closely with the nursery group that is on the site and this ensures that children transfer smoothly to the school. The school makes appropriate use of the local authority's services in order to raise standards further.

Resource management: Good

Resources are managed effectively. There are enough qualified teachers and experienced support staff to teach the curriculum. Constructive use is made of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time to extend pupils' learning experiences. Suitable performance management arrangements are in place, which offer valuable opportunities for continuous professional development.

The range of resources and facilities are used purposefully to support the learning. The school has an appropriate plan to develop the Foundation Phase's outside area by creating specific activity areas with additional equipment.

The headteacher and the governing body's finance committee plan the school's expenditure carefully. There is a strong link between the school's priorities and decisions on expenditure. Successful efforts have been made to gain grants to add to the supply of resources, such as information and communication technology, that extend pupils' learning skills. Budget monitoring processes give relevant consideration to the regular financial reports that are provided by the local authority's education service.

Considering pupils' outcomes and the use that is made of funding, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Results of teachers' assessments must be treated with care because the small numbers of pupils in a year and the high percentage of pupils with additional learning needs can have a considerable effect on the school's performance from one year to the next.

In 2012, the percentage of seven-year-old pupils who achieved the Foundation Phase Indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve outcome 5 or higher in Welsh language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and diversity in combination) is a little higher than the average for the family of similar schools. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals in Wales, the results in all learning areas place the school among the bottom 25%.

In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher outcome, namely outcome 6, at the end of the Foundation Phase, was lower than the family of schools in language, literacy and communication skills, comparable in terms of mathematical development and higher than the family in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

Over a period of four years, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher in a combination of Welsh or English, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 2 is similar or higher than the family of similar schools. Results in individual subjects are more uneven. The results in 2012 are similar or higher than the family of schools' results in Welsh and English but are lower in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals in Wales, the school's performance places it among the top 25% in most years.

At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieve the higher levels is uneven and is generally lower than the averages for the family of schools.

In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school's performance places it in the top 25% in most years. Results in English, mathematics and science vary between the bottom 25% and the top 25%. Results in Welsh place the school in the bottom 25% in most years.

Because of the variations in the number of boys and girls in groups, there is no consistent pattern in the difference between boys' and girls' results although boys achieve better on the whole. Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress and achieve their targets. Because of very small numbers, it is not possible to compare the achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not entitled.

Over a period of four years, pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 2 in their oral, reading and writing skills in Welsh and English are uneven in comparison with the family of schools' averages.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixteen questionnaires were completed by parents. Nearly all are satisfied with the school. All say that their children like school, settle well and feel safe there. They say that pupils' behaviour is good. They are of the opinion that teaching is good and nearly all say that their children are respected, treated fairly and are making appropriate progress. They say that teachers expect their children to work hard and that the school provides additional support for pupils who have any specific individual needs. Nearly all feel that the homework that is given builds well on what their children are learning at school. All are of the opinion that the school prepares their children for the next stage in their education. They feel that their children are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise. They say that the school offers a good variety of activities. Many are of the opinion that they receive regular information about their children's progress. All feel comfortable about discussing anything with the school. Nearly all are of the opinion that the school is well-run.

Responses show a high level of satisfaction among parents, which is higher than the national average for primary schools.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirty-three key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. All state that they feel safe at the school and that the school deals well with bullying. Nearly all pupils indicate that they are taught to be healthy and that there are many opportunities for them to take regular physical exercise. All are of the opinion that they are doing well at school and that teachers help them to learn and make progress. All say that they know with whom to speak if they are anxious about something. They are of the opinion that homework helps them to understand and improve their school work and that they have enough books and equipment to do their work. All are of the opinion that pupils behave well at play time and during the lunch break. Most are of the opinion that pupils behave well during lessons.

Responses offer a positive picture that compares well with national averages for primary schools.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Enir Morgan	Team Inspector
Veronica Williams	Lay Inspector
Richard Martin Evans	Peer Inspector
Amanda Lawrence	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (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 terms – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.