



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 Gymraeg Felindre
Heol Myddfai
Felindre
Swansea
SA5 7ND**

Date of inspection: February 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

This designated Welsh school is situated in the centre of the village of Felindre near Llangyfelach. It serves the village and the surrounding rural catchment area and is maintained by the local education authority of the City and County of Swansea.

The area is described as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Seven point seven per cent (7.7%) of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure that is much lower than the county and national averages. By now, over 30% of children who come to the school live in the most disadvantaged areas of Swansea.

At present, there are 66 pupils between three and 11 years of age on roll. They are admitted on a part-time basis immediately after their third birthday and full-time at the beginning of the academic year when they are five years old. Pupil numbers have risen considerably over recent years. They are taught in a nursery class (afternoons only), one Foundation Phase class and two classes for pupils aged between seven and 11. Pupils' attainment varies greatly when they start at school.

Four pupils (about 6%) are on the additional learning needs register, and one of them has a statement of educational needs.

Eight pupils (about 12%) come from homes where Welsh is spoken. Welsh is the teaching and learning medium across the school, but an English study programme is presented to key stage 2 pupils. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds at the school at present.

The school was last inspected in March 2006, and there have been considerable staff changes since then. The acting headteacher, who is on secondment from another school, has been in post since September 2011, and two new teachers were appointed to key stage two at the same time. A part-time teacher for the nursery class was appointed in October 2011.

The individual school budget for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Felindre in 2011-2012 is £4,628 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Swansea is £11,089 and the minimum is £2,560. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Felindre is in fourth place of the 86 primary schools in Swansea in terms of its 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:

- pupils make strong progress in their learning during their school career and the majority attain levels as good or better than expected according to age and ability;
- almost all pupils work together well and work diligently in learning sessions;
- pupils develop effective communication skills in Welsh and English;
- pupils are extremely effective in using a wide range of information and communication technology equipment;
- teaching across the school is good; and
- the school provides a very imaginative variety of opportunities for the pupils in order to enrich their learning, and uses the local area and its inhabitants very effectively to support learning.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the acting headteacher provides excellent leadership, and a clear vision that is shared effectively;
- all members of staff and volunteers are completely aware of priorities;
- the general quality of co-ordinating areas of responsibility is particularly good;
- self-evaluation underpins the life and work of the school and pays constant attention to evidence of the quality of teaching and learning;
- very effective use of the evidence that arises from self-evaluations to feed improvement plans with a focus on improving skills;
- the annual improvement plans are of particularly good quality and include appropriate strategies that define tasks to be achieved within suitable periods; and
- the close partnership with the local community has a very strong impact on pupils' progress and wellbeing.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

- R1 continue to raise the standards of numeracy skills so that pupils are confident when using them in various contexts;
- R2 improve pupils' attendance;
- R3 ensure consistency and effectiveness of assessment for learning across the school; and
- R4 develop the strategic role of the governing body in monitoring the school's standards and performance.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to respond to the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to produce a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Ysgol Felindre's pupils make strong progress in their learning during their school career. The most able pupils reach high standards.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively, work together well and work diligently in learning sessions. The majority of pupils can discuss their learning effectively, but, across the school, their understanding of what they need to do to improve is inconsistent.

Although many pupils come from homes where English is spoken as a first language, they develop quickly to use Welsh. From an early age, nearly all pupils are confident when communicating orally in Welsh and English. They can converse clearly and enthusiastically about their work and in various informal situations, using appropriate and increasingly rich vocabulary.

Most pupils develop to be effective readers in line with their age and ability. They read fluently, accurately and intelligently in Welsh and English. They can discuss the content of books effectively, express an opinion about them and discuss their favourite authors. They write successfully at length in Welsh and English in a good range of subjects across the curriculum.

From a very early age, pupils make extremely effective use of computer equipment such as still and video cameras, recording equipment, laptops and a number of programmes to support their learning.

Pupils' numeracy skills are developing appropriately on the whole, but a minority of pupils are not sufficiently confident in their skills to use them easily across the curriculum.

Because pupil cohorts have been consistently small at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 during the last five years, it is not possible to form a meaningful judgement based on the results of teachers' assessments. There were no pupils in Year 6 in 2011.

The school's internal arrangements for tracking progress show clearly that all pupils are making consistent progress, and that the majority attain levels as good or better than expected according to age and ability.

Results at the end of key stage 1 in Welsh, mathematics and science vary from year to year because of the size of cohorts. The core subject indicator, which considers pupils' performance in the three subjects together, also shows a variation from year to year.

The results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2 show the same variation and it is not possible to make a comparison at all for 2011.

In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils performing at the higher levels (level 3 or higher) during the last two years is higher than the averages for the family of schools and Wales. In key stage 2, the proportion of pupils performing at level 5 or higher during the four years up until 2010 has varied greatly, without any consistent pattern.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils feel very safe at school and are aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise.

Pupils have an opportunity to express opinions and concerns. The majority of pupils state that they are treated with respect and can turn to adults for help if needed, and contribute actively to school life through the activities of the school council and the 'Sgwad Diogelwch' (Safety Squad).

Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. They respect the school's Golden Rules and apply themselves enthusiastically to learning during lessons.

The school's attendance for 2010-2011 is lower than the national average. This is a decrease over the last two years, while the level of sessions missed without permission is low. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school has been in the bottom 25% for four years.

Pupils are proud of their school and local community and value the opportunity to make a difference. They enjoy contributing towards the activities of the school council and the eco council and are glad of the opportunity to raise money in aid of charities and other people.

As a result of community and external activities, social and life skills are developing in an excellent way. Pupils know their community very well, and value it.

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

The school provides a very imaginative variety of opportunities for the pupils in order to enrich their learning. The way in which teachers have disseminated the ethos and values of the Foundation Phase throughout the school, in order to develop pupils' skills, is excellent.

The way in which staff plan purposefully for developing skills across the curriculum is a particular strength. The continuous provision areas in each class enrich the focus activities very effectively. There are very good opportunities for developing information and communication technology and language skills in a wide variety of contexts. A good range of opportunities is given to pupils in order for them to write in various ways and at length across a range of curriculum subjects.

The local area and its inhabitants are used very effectively to support learning. Through purposeful planning, the local community is used as a special learning

resource. The opportunities that arise from partnerships with the secondary school in the catchment area and the further education college are an obvious strength. Pupils are prepared in an excellent way for becoming responsible, complete members who contribute fully to their community.

The provision for the Cwricwlwm Cymreig has been planned appropriately through appropriate themes such as the Castles of Wales. The challenging and stimulating activities lead to very good progress in communication and reading skills.

The eco council is successful in promoting initiatives such as recycling, saving energy and eating healthily. The school's external area increases learning opportunities and boost children's enthusiasm for learning.

Teaching: Good

Teaching across the school is good. High quality differentiation takes place in lessons in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers have thorough knowledge and detailed, purposeful plans have been provided and are in place throughout the school.

In the minority of lessons where excellent elements are seen, a wide range of teaching styles is used and independent learning is promoted very effectively in order to inspire pupils. There is a diligent, happy ethos and a feeling of respect is apparent in the classes.

All teachers deliver lessons in a lively and clear manner, and model language very well. Reference is made to previous learning, and those experiences are built upon. Teachers share objectives and success criteria consistently with pupils. Teachers make effective and purposeful use of teaching resources, including information and communication technology, in order to enrich learning. Teachers question appropriately and in a probing manner in order to move the learning forward, and in order to encourage the pupils to think for themselves. The classroom assistants support pupils very effectively throughout the school.

Good assessment for learning strategies have been integrated into the lessons and are developing to become a part of the school's ethos. Nearly all pupils are aware of their targets for improvement. Teachers provide clear and supportive feedback. Where marking is most effective, in the majority of classes, targets for improvement are detailed and constructive. The opportunities for pupils to self-assess and assess the work of their peers so that they play a prominent part in their own learning, are inconsistent.

The systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are excellent. The information arising from them as well as teachers' assessments is used extremely effectively to develop the next steps for each pupil. The school offers detailed information to parents on their children's achievement and progress that identifies strengths and targets for improvement within the skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Appropriate use is made of the support of external specialist services, including welfare, education, medical and emergency services. The school is proactive in the way in which it seeks support from other organisations in order to provide opportunities for pupils to receive a wide range of knowledge and skills.

The school provides special care for every one of its pupils. It is a very caring learning environment where staff and pupils respect one another.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual development successfully. The school promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development very effectively.

The school has appropriate procedures and a policy for safeguarding.

The process for identifying pupils with additional learning needs is thorough. The school identifies pupils who need support quickly and provides suitable individual programmes for them. An obvious strength is the consideration given to the pupils' voice in the individual education plans. Effective use is made of specialist services and staff at the school to support and guide pupils with additional learning needs. The school arranges regular review meetings and recommendations are implemented effectively. Parents and carers are included effectively.

Learning environment: Good

There is an inclusive ethos at the school, which is a happy and welcoming community with a warm atmosphere among staff and pupils.

There are policies, plans and procedures in place that ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and that promote equality and social diversity.

Very good use is made of the school's grounds and accommodation in order to stimulate pupils' learning. There is an extensive supply of good quality resources. There are colourful and stimulating displays throughout the whole school. The facilities are clean and the whole site and building are kept in good condition.

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

The acting headteacher provides very effective leadership. She has a clear vision about how the school needs to continue to develop. Her management is purposeful and inclusive and ensures the support of governors, staff, pupils and the community. She has led a thorough and inclusive process of change, succeeding fully in ensuring the commitment of all stakeholders to improving the provision and raising standards.

The headteacher sets clear objectives and targets in order to ensure the school's further development and every member of staff and all volunteers are aware of the priorities and of the school's values.

The overall quality of co-ordination of areas of responsibility is particularly good. As a result of the headteacher's inclusive method of leadership, subject leaders take full responsibility for their areas, producing appropriate policies and action plans.

Improvement plans have been based strongly upon local and national priorities, and the way in which the acting headteacher has co-ordinated these priorities as a basis for her vision is an obvious strength. For example, high priority has been given to promoting and improving standards of literacy and numeracy and to ensuring that pupils acquire good information and communication technology skills.

The governing body is supportive of the school. The governors are beginning to develop their strategic and monitoring roles further, and meet the statutory and regulatory roles fully.

Improving quality: Excellent

Self-evaluation is core to the school's life and work. The acting headteacher has established very successful procedures that pay specific attention to the core subjects and skills. Consideration is given to a range of information that includes data on standards and analysis of children's work. The thoroughness of this activity ensures provision that meets the requirements of all pupils. This is an excellent aspect.

The teachers and the headteacher pay constant attention to the quality of teaching and learning through classroom observation and successful arrangements have been established to discover parents' and pupils' opinions through questionnaires. The headteacher ensures that she observes every member of staff and support staff regularly. Teachers discuss at length with pupils when monitoring subjects and consider the results of questionnaires in the self-evaluation process. The process is continuous, and receives direct opinions from pupils, governors and parents.

Information from self-evaluations is used very effectively to develop the priorities of the improvement plan, with a focus on improving skills. There is a natural link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedure and the priorities of the school improvement plan. The annual improvement plans are of particularly good quality and include appropriate strategies that define tasks to be achieved within suitable periods.

The responsibility for co-ordinating strategies has been allocated appropriately to various staff members and this has led to specific improvements in provision and standards across the school. The headteacher monitors the assessment of every class regularly with input from staff ensuring consistency in terms of levelling and ensuring that any underachievement is identified quickly.

The school works with nearby schools where very effective networks of professional practice have been developed. This has led to improvements in curricular planning and valuable developments in arrangements for pupils' wellbeing.

Partnership working: Excellent

The acting headteacher operates robust strategic partnerships with all the school's stakeholders and does that in order to ensure continuous improvement.

Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are strong and contribute effectively to realising the school's goals. This has a very positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

There are very constructive links with local businesses and higher education institutions, and the school places great emphasis on developing education beyond the walls of the school. The recent co-operation between the community, the local further education college and the secondary school on a castle building project is an excellent example of this. Through the project, pupils developed a firm understanding of the skills and elementary principles of building, by working closely and effectively with experts in the field.

The school plays a prominent part in the life of the local community. Very often, the school will lead on community initiatives for the good of the pupils and the good of the community. For example, under the leadership and stimulus of the headteacher, the community secured a piece of land to be developed to create a safe path to the school and create an outside environment for developing outdoor and environmental education for pupils. Members of the community recognise the school as a full partner in village life, although 70% of pupils live outside the community.

The arrangements for transferring pupils to the secondary school prepare the older pupils well for the next stage in their education. The school works effectively with other primary schools in the area as well as with the secondary schools in order to moderate and standardise pupils' work.

There are strong links with the local authority and teacher training institutions.

Resource management: Good

Leaders and managers manage resources and staff allocated to the school appropriately. Suitable arrangements are in place for evaluating and managing the performance of all staff and there are valuable opportunities for the staff to benefit from Continuous Professional Development.

Excellent use of classroom assistants is planned and their contribution throughout the school in supporting pupils helps to raise standards. They also give effective support to children with special needs and able children.

The headteacher and governors have good processes for monitoring the budget. There is a strong link between the school's priorities and expenditure decisions.

The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Since establishing the family of similar schools, a number of schools have closed and there are only seven schools left. Because pupil cohorts are consistently small at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, it is not possible to form a meaningful judgement based on the results.

Key stage 1

The school's performance in Welsh, mathematics and science in combination has been variable. In 2011, the results of teacher assessments were around the averages for the family and Wales. There is no significant gap between the performance of boys and girls, and it is not possible to make a meaningful comparison in terms of performance at level 3 or higher.

Key stage 2

Results of teachers' assessments varied greatly, and it is not possible to take any meaningful information from them because of the small numbers. For example, the school's performance in comparison with that of similar schools in terms of the percentage of children entitled to free school meals jumps suddenly from being among the top 25% to being among the bottom 25%.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Pupil questionnaires

Twenty-three pupils responded to the questionnaire. In general, the responses are very positive. Most pupils believe that the school teaches them how to keep healthy, and they know to whom to turn if they are worried or anxious. Most also say that adults at the school help them to learn and make progress. Many pupils say that they feel safe at school and that the school deals well with any bullying. They believe that they are doing well at school and that there are many opportunities to take regular physical exercise. Many pupils know what to do and to whom to speak if they find their work difficult and they believe that their homework helps them to understand and improve their school work. The majority of pupils say that there are enough books, equipment and computers at school, and that other pupils behave well in lessons and at playtime and lunchtime.

Parent questionnaires

Twenty-four responses were received. Many parents say that the school is well run. All of them state that teaching is good and that their children have had support to settle in well. Most parents say they are satisfied with the school in general, and that their children like school. They are of the opinion that their children are making good progress, and that they behave well at school. They say that the staff expect their children to work hard, and that homework builds well on school work. Parents are also of the opinion that staff treat pupils with respect, and that pupils are encouraged to keep healthy and have the opportunity to take regular physical exercise. They believe that their children are safe at school and that appropriate additional support is given when needed. Most parents say that the school helps their children to grow to be more mature and to shoulder responsibility and that there is a good variety of activities for them, in school and outside. The school prepares children well for the next stage in their education. Many parents say that they receive regular information about their children's progress and that they understand the complaints procedure, and feel comfortable asking questions or making suggestions to the school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Enir Rees Morgan	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Meinir Lloyd Jones	Peer Inspector
Gayle Shenton	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 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. FPYear 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.