



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
Pennant Primary School,
Penybont Fawr,
Oswestry,
Powys,
SY10 0NT**

Date of inspection: September 2011

by

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for

**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 Pennant is situated in the rural village of Penybont Fawr near the town of Llanfyllin, Powys, and it serves the village and the surrounding area. There are 61 pupils aged 4-11 years on the register. The vast majority of the pupils have received pre-school education. The area in which the school is situated is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Less than one per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, and this is lower than national and local averages.

The school admits pupils across the ability range. There are seven pupils, which represents 11% of the number on roll, identified by the school as having special educational needs, and this is below the national and local averages. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

English is the main language spoken in the homes of the vast majority of pupils. The main aim of the school's language policy is to ensure that pupils are bilingual before they transfer to the secondary school.

The school was previously inspected in October, 2005. The present acting head teacher was appointed in 2009.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Pennant is £3,496, which compares with a maximum of £11,812 and a minimum of £2,891 for primary schools in Powys. The school has the 55th highest budget per pupil out of the 101 primary schools in Powys.

Summary

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

Current performance

Pennant Primary School is good because:

- many of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in the school;
- pupils achieve good results overall in key stage 2 and key stage 1 results are improving;
- pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good;
- the school promotes pupils' welfare well;
- the school provides a rich and diverse range of learning experiences; and
- there are significant strengths in the teaching.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for school improvement are good because:

- the acting head teacher's strategic leadership creates confidence, trust and co-operation in the school community;
- all members of staff work together very effectively as a team to implement the acting head teacher's clear vision;
- the self-evaluation process and the school development plan concentrate firmly on raising standards ; and
- there is an ethos of continuous improvement in the school.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

A1 raise the standard of spelling in English in key stage 2;

A2 raise the level of challenge to meet the needs of the most able pupils;

A3 continue to improve assessment for learning, especially consistency across classes, and improve the quality of marking; and

A4 ensure that the school satisfies the statutory requirements regarding 'The Annual Governors' Report to Parents'.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The number of pupils in the cohort to be assessed annually at the end of both key stages varies, and is very often low. This means that one or two pupils' results at times can have a great influence on the cohort's performance.

Overall, during the last few years, key stage 1 pupils have achieved on a higher level when compared with local and national averages, but the school's performance has been on a low level when compared with similar schools and the family of schools during the last two years. Key stage 2 pupils' performance has been on a high level when compared with local, national, similar schools and also the family of schools during the last two years. In 2010, boys performed better than girls in mathematics in key stage 1, but there were no obvious differences in key stage 2.

Pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals and those that have special educational needs are making the expected progress according to their age and ability. However, the most able pupils do not always achieve at a level commensurate to their ability.

There is good progress overall in pupils' work, in their books and in the sessions observed. Most listen well and respect each others' contributions and most pupils' oral skills are good. They speak confidently and they are able to explain clearly what they are reading and also about their life in school.

A report on Ysgol Pennant September 2011

By the end of key stage 2, older pupils read confidently and fluently in both Welsh and English. The majority are competent writers but, on occasions, the resources they use limit the amount of extended and creative writing they produce. However, there are interesting examples of innovative and creative writing, for example, in poetry and in homework projects. A minority of pupils' spelling skills in English are less secure.

The majority of pupils in both key stages write in various forms and for different purposes, displaying the ability to vary their style. Overall, pupils have a firm grasp of grammar rules and many make good use of relevant subject terminology.

Most pupils throughout the school work independently, make good use of their time and keep on task. They display enthusiasm and a positive attitude towards learning. Many pupils' thinking skills are developing successfully in both key stages.

The development of the Welsh language and the fostering of bilingualism are one of the strengths of this school with all pupils studying Welsh as a first language programme of study. Pupils from non- Welsh- speaking backgrounds become fluent within a short period of time and the Cwricwlwm Cymreig underpins the work and the ethos of the school.

Many pupils make effective use of numeracy and information and communications technology across the curriculum.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils feel safe in the school and turn confidently to adults for support and guidance. They enjoy taking part in physical activity and understand the essence of healthy eating and that this contributes towards a healthy body and mind.

Pupils of all ages play together happily at break and lunch times. They develop well as hard-working individuals who willingly contribute to school life and community activities.

Pupils' attitude towards teaching is positive. They work effectively with each other in their lessons and in their class activities.

Attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection was 94.6% and this is higher than local (93.9%) and national (93.1%) figures. There were no unauthorised absences during the year, and this is also lower than local and national figures. Pupils arrive punctually at the school and in the learning sessions.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour is good. They are always courteous to each other and to adults. The majority take part in extra-curricular activities, such as weekly games clubs and Urdd activities.

The school council is hard working and contributes positively to school life. Pupils develop a good understanding of the concept of the green school and initiatives, such as the campaign to reduce and re-cycle waste, have increased their awareness of issues relating to the local community.

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

The school provides a very wide, balanced range of stimulating experiences for all pupils, which responds fully to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education .

The provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology has been carefully planned, with a clear emphasis on continuity and progression in learning. The provision across the school is especially effective to develop pupils' thinking skills. There is good planning for educational visits and visitors to the school, which enrich the learning programmes. These have a very positive impact on pupils' progress and achievement. In addition, the school has developed links with a range of local establishments which give pupils varied and relevant experiences.

The provision to develop the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension enriches the curriculum. This element is pivotal to the whole work and life of the school. As a result, pupils' knowledge and awareness of their location, their area and Wales is developing in an exceptionally good way.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is developed well across the curriculum and in the activities of the eco council, and the school has gained the Green School accreditation. A variety of opportunities are provided to promote pupils' understanding of recycling, monitoring of the use of water and energy and improving the school environment. The school's external environment is developing effectively to become a valuable contribution to pupils' experiences.

There are good links with schools in other countries and the school is part of the Comenius project. The school's charitable work provides invaluable opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good and engages pupils' interest and involvement. Teachers have thorough knowledge of their learning areas and the curriculum. They motivate pupils well and ensure that they are aware of their targets. Appropriate plans are provided across the school. Effective use is made of good questioning to ensure progress, but the questioning is not always challenging for the most able pupils.

A hardworking, happy ethos and an ambience of mutual respect are evident features in classes. Overall, learning assistants give good support to pupils, and they work together effectively with class teachers. At times, the quality of marking is good, constructive and notes what is required for pupils to improve their work, but this practice is not consistent across the school. Assessment for learning strategies are developing slowly.

Pupils' achievements are assessed regularly and the results are analysed in detail to track progress. The school uses an internal process to track pupils' progress. The

A report on Ysgol Pennant
September 2011

school moderates work regularly in order to ensure consistency in assessing; this is undertaken on a whole-school level in addition to detailed standardisation in the core subjects.

Parents receive information on their children's achievement and progress in the form of an annual report and in three annual meetings. The reports are clear and provide targets for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Pupils' welfare is promoted well by the school. Appropriate emphasis is placed on a healthy diet and physical activities to promote pupils' physical wellbeing. The school has high expectations regarding attendance and there are effective procedures in place to deal promptly with unexplained absences. The provision for health, safety and hygiene is good.

There is an appropriate range of policies in place to promote children's welfare, including suitable arrangements for preventing bullying. The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding. There are good learning experiences to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including effective opportunities to learn about other beliefs. The school encourages pupils to work together and they, and the local community, benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are provided.

The provision for special educational needs complies with the Code of Practice and the co-ordinator is developing good ownership of the area. The school maintains effective links with specialist agencies. Good individual education plans are provided and the progress reviews ensure appropriate input from stakeholders, including parents and external agencies.

Learning environment: Good

The school promotes an inclusive ethos and there is an appropriate range of policies and procedures in place to promote equality and equal access to the curriculum. Pupils' backgrounds are appreciated and procedures to prevent oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, are very effective. By working together with members of the local community, and as a result of different learning experiences both in and outside the school, pupils have a clear understanding of issues relating to equality.

The school uses the building and grounds effectively and they are well maintained. The quality of resources in the classrooms is good and they are purposefully used to support pupils' learning needs. For example, the school has a good supply of information technology equipment, which is used effectively to improve the provision and to raise standards in the subject.

Effective use is made of internal space in the school and the learning areas are motivating and colourful. Pupils' work, successes and progress are celebrated in appropriate displays.

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

The acting head teacher has a clear vision for the school to develop pupils to their full potential and to ensure that they become confident individuals who believe in themselves. She shares this vision very successfully and creates confidence, trust and co-operation amongst staff, governors, parents and pupils.

She gives a clear strategic direction to the life and work of the school and this has a positive influence on pupils' standards and welfare.

Regular staff meetings concentrate appropriately on issues of performance improvement, including the school's improvement priorities. Overall, staff effectively understand and undertake their roles in relation to the school's aims and plans. Data is used well to analyse and monitor performance.

The school has appropriate performance management arrangements which help staff to improve their practices. These arrangements lead to appropriate targets that encompass individual training, development needs and whole-school priorities.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's performance. Members understand the issues that arise when comparing the school's performance with that of similar schools. The governing body contributes appropriately to the self-evaluation procedures and prioritising improvements. Governors support the school effectively as critical friends and there are appropriate arrangements in place to report to parents and deal with complaints. The governing body does not meet all the statutory requirements for the annual governors' report to parents.

Improving quality: Good

Under the acting head teachers' energetic and skilful leadership, a culture of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is developing well in the school. The acting head teacher, teachers and older pupils undertake a good range of monitoring activities. All members of staff and members of the governing body have an opportunity to contribute to the self-evaluation process.

Various types of data are analyzed effectively in order to attain a clear picture of pupils' progress and motivation and appropriate targets are set. Good use is made of advisers in the process. The school's self-evaluation document is comprehensive and useful and gives a clear picture of the school as it is at the present time.

There is a firm link between the self-evaluation process and planning for improvement and the information that is collated is used effectively to produce a clear and comprehensive school development plan.

The school collaborates well with local schools and has developed effective professional practice networks. This has led to improvements in curricular planning and invaluable developments in the arrangements for pupils' welfare.

Partnership working: Good

There are effective partnerships with parents and carers and good transition arrangements with the local nursery. There are good links and appropriate transition

A report on Ysgol Pennant
September 2011

arrangements with the secondary school with many effective activities arranged. There are strong partnerships with local businesses and the local community. Appropriate standardising and moderating work occurs in the core subjects.

Effective visits are organised to local places of interest and members of the community regularly visit the school to share their experiences with pupils. Pupils take part in various local activities, such as eisteddfodau, religious services, concerts and shows. This close relationship enriches pupils' experiences very effectively.

Resource management: Good

Overall, appropriate use is made of teachers' and teaching assistants' time and experience. The school is appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum and teaching assistants make effective contributions in classes. Performance management arrangements identify staff's development needs and the provision for planning, preparation and assessment time is appropriate. The school buildings are maintained to a high standard and the range and quality of learning resources are good. Financial resources are allocated appropriately to match the priorities the school has identified.

In the context of the outcomes the school ensures for pupils the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1: Comments on performance data:

Many pupils start school with skills that are close to, or higher than, the expected levels and, during their time in the Foundation Phase, they make good progress.

The number of pupils in the cohort to be assessed annually at the end of both key stages varies, and is very often low. This means that one or two pupils' results at times can have a great influence on the cohort's performance.

In key stage 1, overall, during the last four years, seven year old pupils perform better than other pupils when compared with Wales and local averages. This is because of the number who succeed in attaining the expected level, that is level 2, in the three core subjects, Welsh, mathematics and science, combined. However, pupils' performance in the last two years has not been as good when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals. Their performance then is amongst the lowest 50% in mathematics and the core subject indicator, which is the expected level in the three core subjects, in three of the last four years. The school's performance was better than the family of schools' performance in Welsh and science in 2008 and 2010 and boys' performance was better than girls' in mathematics in 2010. No pupil achieved level three in mathematics and science between 2007 and 2009.

Teacher assessment results at the end of key stage 2 are consistently high during the last two years and the performance trend is upwards. In 2009 and 2010, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) is substantially higher than

A report on Ysgol Pennant
September 2011

the percentages of the family of schools and Wales in Welsh, English, mathematics and science. There are no obvious differences between boys and girls.

In 2010 the percentage of pupils who attained a higher level than expected (level 5) in mathematics and science was higher when compared with the family of schools', local and Wales averages.

When comparing key stage 2 results with similar schools across Wales from the perspective of free school meals, the school's results for the expected level (level 4) in Welsh, English, mathematics and science was high in 2009 and 2010.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

12 parents or carers responded to the questionnaire. Everyone was satisfied with the school, agreeing that their children liked the school and that their children had received support to settle well when they started in school. All agreed that staff treat pupils fairly and with respect; but a minority disagreed that they received regular information about their children's progress. All felt that staff expected their children to work hard and to give of their best; that homework builds well on what their children learn in school, and that their children are making good progress.

All felt that their children were safe in school; that pupils behaved well; and that the teaching was good. Also, all felt that their children were encouraged to be healthy and to exercise regularly; all felt comfortable about asking questions of the school, making suggestions or specifying a problem; and all felt that the school helps their children to become more mature and to accept responsibility; that their children were prepared well for moving on to their next school; and that the school is well run. All thought that there was appropriate additional support in relation to any individual specific needs. Everyone understood the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints and felt that there was a good variety of activities, including trips or visits.

Responses to learner questionnaires

29 pupils responded to the questionnaire. All pupils felt safe in school; they felt that they were doing well in school; that there were many opportunities in the school to have regular physical exercise; that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress; and that there are plenty of books, equipment and computers to do their work. Most stated that the school deals well with any bullying and that they know with whom to speak if they are worried or upset. Many stated that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school and many felt that others behaved well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Dr David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Carolyn Thomas	Team Inspector
Mr Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Mrs Dilys Ellis Jones	Peer Inspector
Mrs Annwen Watkins	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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Year groups and key stages

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

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11