



*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**

**Ammanford Nursery School  
Stryd Fawr  
Ammanford  
Carmarthenshire  
SA18 2NS**

**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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## Context

Ammanford Nursery School is situated in the centre of the town of Ammanford on the same campus as the town's primary school. The education authority is Carmarthenshire. Pupils come from a wide geographical area. Children's family circumstances and attainment on entry to the school vary greatly.

Ammanford Nursery School is a school that has two linguistic streams, according to parents' wishes. At present, there are 48 in the stream in which Welsh is the medium of learning and 37 in which English is the main language of learning, and Welsh is learnt as a second language.

Eighty-five three to four year old children are on roll and they are admitted full-time in the term following their third birthday. They move on to the primary school of their parents' choice in the term before they reach five years of age. They are taught in groups according to their language development, numeracy and fine motor skills. The school's staff include the headteacher, three permanent, full-time teachers and six learning assistants who have level 3 qualifications or higher.

Twenty-four point seven per cent (24.7%) of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Nine children are on the additional learning needs register and no pupils have a statement of additional learning needs at present.

Nearly 92.7% of pupils come from homes where English is the language of the home. Welsh is spoken fluently in the families of 13% of children who receive education through the medium of Welsh. Six point one per cent (6.1%) of pupils are from different ethnic backgrounds.

The individual school budget per pupil in 2012-2013 for Ammanford Nursery School is £4,116, compared with a national average of £6,276 for all maintained nursery schools in Wales.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- pupils make consistent and very good progress during their period at the school;
- pupils' Welsh first language oral standards are excellent;
- in general, pupils attain the expected standards or better for their age in language and literacy development, personal and social development and mathematical development;
- pupils' personal, social and community skills are excellent;
- the school provides rich learning experiences for its pupils; and
- teaching is consistently good across the school.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher shares a clear vision successfully with governors, staff, parents and pupils;
- all staff work together very well to raise standards;
- procedures for self-evaluation are developing well and include all the school's staff;
- the school analyses performance data effectively; and
- the school sets suitable priorities annually in the school development plan.

## Recommendations

R1 Develop opportunities for practising writing skills independently across the learning areas

R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to make choices about their own learning

R3 Ensure that the school development plan's targets give full consideration to funding sources

R4 Develop further the strategic role of the governing body as critical friends

### What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice that has been seen during the inspection.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

Pupils make consistent and very good progress during their period at the school. They develop their learning skills successfully and often achieve work of a high standard in learning sessions.

Most pupils show an understanding of their own learning. They are aware of their targets, and they discuss the good features of their work increasingly intelligently. Although they are developing into confident learners, only a few of them make decisions about their own learning.

Most pupils in the Welsh stream, whatever their linguistic background, communicate excellently in oral Welsh. They converse clearly and intelligently about their work, and informally in various situations. They have a rich and very varied vocabulary, including vocabulary and idioms that are relevant to their areas of activity. Similarly, the oral skills of most pupils in the English stream attain a very good standard in class activities and in the daily life of the school.

The early reading skills of most pupils in both streams develop very effectively, through appropriate activities. They can identify initial letters of words consistently and successfully, along with an increasing number of familiar words. The best pupils can put letters together to create words, and they identify words in books and in displays across the school. Pupils' knowledge of the characteristics of books is very strong.

Most pupils' early writing skills are developing appropriately. They can create and follow patterns effectively, but only a minority of them write spontaneously as part of general classroom activity.

Children in the English stream develop Welsh language oral skills very effectively. They blend in well with the school's Welsh ethos, and use Welsh easily in various activities.

There are only pupils aged between three and four years at the school. As a result, there is no data available to compare the school's performance with that of similar schools. The school's system for tracking standards shows that pupils generally attain the expected standards or better for their age in language and literacy development, personal development and mathematical development.

There is no pattern of difference between the progress of boys and girls, nor of children of different ethnic backgrounds. Children who have additional learning needs, including looked after children, make appropriate progress towards their targets.

## **Wellbeing: Excellent**

Pupils have a strong understanding of how they can keep healthy and be safe. They know how important it is to brush teeth, wash hands and warm up the body before physical exercise. Children enjoy the opportunities to play in the outdoor area and do this safely and free of any physical danger.

Children enjoy learning. They apply themselves excitedly to all their activities, inside the building and in the outdoor area. Their behaviour is excellent and they behave maturely and very confidently when dealing with each other, with staff and with other adults.

The newly-formed school council makes decisions that have an obvious influence on the school's life and work. It does this in a way that is compatible with the school's context, for example, holding a survey to collect their fellow pupils' opinion.

The children enjoy welcoming people from the community to their school and they visit their community regularly. Their activities beyond the school's boundaries, including visits, performances and links, are an excellent feature, as they display a very high level of personal and social skills. This prepares these young pupils very well for life outside the school.

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

The school provides a curriculum and a programme of activity that meets the needs of its young pupils in full.

Teachers and assistants differentiate effectively within their schemes of work. Grouping children according to ability in key skills ensures that every individual makes very good progress.

The whole-school plans ensure that there is firm development and progression in key skills across the curriculum. Teachers provide various opportunities for pupils to develop their early speaking, listening and reading skills. However, there are not enough less formal opportunities for developing early writing skills across learning areas.

The school provides good opportunities for children to follow lines of investigation under the guidance of teachers and support staff. This develops increasing confidence in pupils. There are a few opportunities within free activities for pupils to decide on the direction of their own learning.

Provision for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is superb. An excellent example of this is how such young pupils can discuss the work of Sir Kyffin Williams and other famous Welsh people such as Aneurin Bevan.

Learning experiences are enriched considerably by regular visits away from the site and by welcoming an extensive number of visitors to the school. This develops pupils' personal, social and community skills very effectively and enriches their understanding of life beyond the school.

Very valuable and creative experiences are provided inside and outside classrooms to promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The young pupils' understanding of this is a strength in the school.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teachers have robust knowledge of all the learning areas of the Foundation Phase and the range and quality of the school's teaching methods are consistently good.

There is a very good working relationship between teachers, support staff and pupils. By ensuring clear and appropriate objectives for their lessons, they provide suitable activities for pupils.

Teachers and assistants model particularly polished language and concentrate on developing pupils' oral skills to the utmost. Nearly all question particularly skilfully in order to extend pupils' understanding and develop their thinking skills.

The system for assessing children's attainment is robust in the school. Through continuous assessment and detailed monitoring of assessment data, each individual's progress is monitored consistently. This enables staff to provide additional support to groups of pupils and individuals according to need.

All teachers include effective elements of assessment for learning in their lessons. Many teachers' and assistants' oral feedback is constructive, and expresses clearly what needs to be done to improve their work. In a very few lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to reflect on how well they have completed the task.

The school provides useful information to parents on their children's progress.

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

The quality of care, instruction and support that are provided for learners at the school is very good and teachers give firm guidance which promotes pupils' wellbeing in an excellent way.

The importance of how and why to keep healthy is promoted successfully. The school arranges a number of interesting community projects to ensure pupils' awareness and understanding. For example, the school encourages pupils to buy the school's garden produce and promotes 'walk to school' days regularly.

The school provides appropriately for pupils' spiritual development in collective worship sessions. The school has robust procedures for addressing attendance and punctuality issues.

There is effective provision for listening to concerns through circle time sessions. The school makes extensive use of the expertise of agencies such as the police, health services and social services. This interrelationship ensures very early and effective support when needed.

There is comprehensive provision for pupils who have additional learning needs. Their learning needs are identified quickly by teachers and the co-ordinator. Through regular assessments, the school tracks their progress and sets suitable improvement targets for them. The school makes effective use of specialist agencies to support the needs of all pupils who receive specific provision. Parents have an active role in all processes.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and they are not a cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school creates a very inclusive and friendly ethos. Pupils are happy in each other's company and are very willing to help each other. The relationship between staff and pupils is very close and staff know the children well and are sensitive to their needs and to their parents' aspirations.

All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and appropriate procedures are in place to promote equality and social diversity. This helps to ensure the best care for them.

Although the building is old, the site is stimulating, colourful and attractive and is used effectively. There is a wide range of various learning areas inside and outside the building and a substantial supply of good quality resources. The staff uses the interesting displays, which include pupils' work, to enrich learning. The toilets are clean and suitable and the whole site and building are well-kept.

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

The headteacher knows the school very well. She has a clear vision and she shares it successfully with governors, staff, parents and pupils. These partnerships ensure a strategic unified direction. All staff co-operate very well to raise standards. All pupils and staff are appreciated and they all have very specific responsibilities to develop the school as an inclusive learning community. This supports the school's ethos and offers an environment that encourages effective learning by fostering a feeling of pride in the school and its pupils.

The governors undertake their roles and responsibilities conscientiously and they have a very strong interest in school life. Nearly all members of the body visit the school to monitor aspects of the curriculum in order to obtain a wider picture of the school's standards and performance. They attend suitable training and their role as critical friends is developing.

The school pays due attention to national and local priorities and has won Eco School and Healthy School status. It has also won a quality mark to acknowledge its good work in planning for developing pupils' ICT skills. Considering the context of the school, this is quite an achievement.



The school has developed an effective tracking system in order to analyse pupils' progress. This enables teachers to make effective provision for groups of pupils according to their need.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The headteacher and staff have an accurate understanding of the school's main strengths in addition to the areas for improvement. Self-evaluation procedures are developing well and include all the school's staff. A wide range of evidence is considered as part of the process and pupils' and parents' opinions are taken seriously.

The monitoring programme considers the analysis of a range of data and lesson observations. It also focuses on evaluating the effect of projects such as Fair Trade, Healthy Schools and 'Multi-Cultural Week' on standards. The outcomes of this process are a firm foundation for the self-evaluation report.

The school sets suitable priorities annually in the school development plan. The majority of these priorities identify measurable targets in order to measure success, but there is not sufficient consideration of the funding implications and sources.

The school is a very strong learning community. There are very good procedures for supporting the professional development of all members of staff. The school co-operates effectively with other schools, external agencies and the local authority and this leads to raising standards.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Arrangements for working in partnership are good and this contributes very effectively to the quality of provision and to the high standards that pupils achieve.

The school has very good links with the community and it communicates very effectively with parents. Parents confirm the success of activities such as international projects and multi-cultural week. These partnerships are excellent elements and they contribute very effectively to realising the school's aims.

Staff co-operate effectively with other schools to standardise assessments of pupils' work. They also co-operate well with primary schools to which pupils transfer and effective transition systems are implemented.

Many members of the community are invited to the school to work with pupils. This enriches their education and expands their knowledge in a variety of areas, including citizenship and charity work.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school is well-staffed and resources are appropriate for teaching the curriculum effectively. In general, good use is made of staff's time, experience and expertise and co-operation between teachers and learning support staff is very good. There is an effective and established system for managing the performance of all staff, which offers good opportunities for continuous professional development.

Teachers make good use of planning, preparation and assessment time, and arrangements for monitoring its effect is developing sufficiently. The headteacher, the governing body's finance committee and the local authority's officers co-operate effectively to manage the school budget. However, spending is not linked clearly enough with the priorities in the school development plan.

Considering the good standards that have been achieved generally, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

As there is no comparative data available for the school, it is not possible to create an analysis.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixty parents responded to the questionnaire, which is a considerably higher percentage than the average across schools in Wales. Parents have a high regard for the school and responses to every question are very positive, and are more positive than the average across Wales.

All parents say that:

- their children like school;
- their children received support to settle in well;
- their children are making good progress;
- teaching is good;
- homework builds well on what children learn at school;
- staff treat all children fairly;
- their children are encouraged to keep healthy and eat healthily;
- their children are safe at school;
- the school helps their children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility;
- their children have been prepared well for the next stage in their education;
- there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits;
- the school is well run; and
- they are satisfied with the school in general.

Nearly all parents say:

- that pupils behave well at school;
- that pupils receive additional support as needed;
- that the school gives regular information about pupils' progress;
- that they feel comfortable about raising a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem; and
- that they understand the school's system for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Dyfrig Wyn Ellis	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Sioned Thomas	Peer Inspector
Eireen Jones	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 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.