



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

**Ferryside VCP School
Ferryside
Carmarthenshire
SA17 5TB**

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:

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

Ferryside Voluntary Controlled Primary School is situated in Ferryside, about nine miles from the town of Carmarthen. There are 66 full-time pupils on roll, including six full-time nursery age children. Children are taught in three classes. The school indicates that pupils come from varied backgrounds and that some are privileged and others are disadvantaged.

Ninety-two per cent of pupils come from homes in which English is the main language. A very few pupils come from an ethnic background and 9% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is considerably lower than the national average.

At present, 14% are on the additional educational needs register and none of the pupils has a statement of educational needs.

The school was last inspected in 2007. The current headteacher and another teacher were appointed to their posts in September 2012.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ferryside Voluntary Controlled Primary School in 2012-2013 is £3,627. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £25,997 and the minimum is £2,878. Ferryside Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in 56th place of the 108 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of the school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- Ferryside School is a close, warm and inclusive society that offers special care to its pupils;
- the school provides a wide range of interesting experiences that create interest and respond to the needs of many pupils;
- pupils' Welsh oral skills are good by the end of the Foundation Phase;
- pupils behave well, are courteous and have a positive attitude towards learning;
- pupils' health and wellbeing are promoted effectively; and
- pupils who have additional learning needs make consistent and continuous progress.

However:

- there is not enough progress in many pupils' reading and extended writing skills in both languages in key stage 2;
- there is not enough challenge to ensure that the most able pupils make appropriate progress across the curriculum;
- assessment systems are not yet robust enough; and
- assessment for learning has not been developed completely and marking does not always show clearly enough how to improve the quality and content of work.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the school has a suitable monitoring programme which sets a clear direction for the future;
- the headteacher has determined some important aspects for improvement and the staff and governing body understand the priorities for improvement;
- the school co-operates appropriately with a range of partners in relation to curricular experiences and promoting pupils' wellbeing; and
- there is strong commitment to co-operating with other schools locally to develop aspects of provision.

However:

- the school's self-evaluation report does not provide an accurate enough picture of the quality of teaching;
- although appropriate curricular responsibilities have been shared between

- members of staff, in general, co-ordinators have not had enough effect on the quality of the curriculum and standards; and
- although many pupils develop to be confident learners, they do not show increasing ability to work independently.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of extended writing across the curriculum in both languages in key stage 2
- R2 Improve aspects of teaching in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2
- R3 Improve planning in order to differentiate effectively and ensure a consistent challenge for the most able pupils
- R4 Provide more opportunities to promote pupils' thinking skills and ensure that they take more responsibility for their own learning
- R5 Strengthen the school's self-evaluation systems, especially arrangements for lesson observation and monitoring pupils' work

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Pupils' Welsh oral are good skills by the end of the Foundation Phase. Many discuss well across a range of subjects, and they use wide vocabulary. By the end of key stage 2, the majority speak correctly in Welsh in formal situations, but not at length.

Pupils' reading skills develop well as they move through the school. Most pupils read confidently and at a level that is suitable to their age and ability. Only a minority of pupils foster an interest in books and develop into keen readers.

A very few pupils are aware of their targets and they begin to discuss the good features of their work with some understanding of what they could do to improve. Pupils' ability to evaluate their own work and their peers' work is developing appropriately. Although they are developing to become confident learners, their ability to work independently is not developing appropriately. The standards of many pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills are inadequate.

Pupils who have additional learning needs make consistent and continuous progress. However, more able pupils do not make appropriate progress across the curriculum.

Many pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in their writing. They use increasing vocabulary and phrases and they begin to vary sentences and use punctuation. A minority of them choose to undertake written activities as part of general classroom activity. In key stage 2, a minority of pupils make good progress in writing in both languages but presentation on paper is not consistently neat. Higher ability pupils do not develop in their ability to write at length across the curriculum appropriately.

Although a minority of pupils make good progress in numeracy, the skills of the majority of pupils have not developed sufficiently and they are not used consistently in different subjects and learning areas. The majority of pupils develop information and communication technology skills well across the curriculum. Most achieve good standards in creative skills, and the quality of their artwork is particularly high.

Because of the small number of pupils that are often at the end of both key stages, results of teachers' assessments must be treated carefully. There are no obvious patterns of differences between boys' and girls' performance.

In 2012, the proportion of Foundation Phase pupils who achieved the expected level in the Foundation Phase outcome indicator was a little lower than the average of other schools in the family. The percentage of pupils who attained the expected outcome in every individual learning area was higher than the average for the schools in the family.

However, no children achieved the higher level in any one of the learning areas in 2012. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, pupils' performance in the Foundation Phase placed the school among the bottom 25% for achieving outcome 6 in the three learning areas.

In key stage 2, pupils' achievement is good in relation to attaining the expected level in a combination of Welsh or English, mathematics and science. The results for English, Welsh, mathematics and science in 2012 were also higher than the average for the results for the family. There was considerable progress in pupils' performance in Welsh, and science results have been consistently higher than the family average for the last five years. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level in English, mathematics and science was higher than the average for the schools in the family. However, during the last five years, no children have attained the higher level in Welsh. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the proportion of children who are entitled to free school meals, pupils' achievement at the higher levels in English and science placed the school among the top 25%, but in Welsh and mathematics it is among the lower 50%.

Wellbeing: Good

Ferryside School is a happy school in which pupils show a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise. They feel very safe at the school and know to whom to turn if they feel anxious. All pupils are courteous and children's behaviour during lessons and in informal situations is very good.

Nearly all pupils show genuine respect for adults and peers and this is a strength throughout the school. The care that is shown by older children as they look after the younger ones is very good and contributes to the inclusive and homely ethos that exists throughout the school. This is a good basis for developing their life skills further.

Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate opportunities to undertake responsibilities through their contribution to the School Council and Eco activities. They meet regularly and are proud of the initiatives that they have to improve the school's environment. The majority of pupils take advantage of various opportunities to be part of the community around them and contribute extensively to the school's charity work.

Many older pupils possess some skills that help them to improve their own learning. However, this element has not been developed sufficiently across key stage 2. Most pupils show obvious motivation in their learning, but they do not contribute sufficiently to planning what they learn through taking responsibilities and making decisions.

Pupils' attendance has varied over the last four years between the upper 50% and the lower 50% of levels for similar schools on the basis of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Pupils' punctuality when arriving at school is good.

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

The school provides a wide range of interesting experiences that engender the interest and respond to the needs of many pupils. Activities meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, provision in the Foundation Phase does not satisfy requirements fully, and there is not enough challenge for pupils of higher ability across the school. At its best, there is effective planning which provides differentiated activities and appropriate resources. However, this is not consistent across the school.

Provision to develop independent learning skills and thinking skills is beginning to receive appropriate attention. Provision does not ensure that pupils develop good range of reading and writing skills in both languages by the end of key stage 2. The school is reviewing elements of its provision for developing pupils' literacy, communication and numeracy skills. However, arrangements have not had time to establish themselves and to have a full influence on pupils' standards.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship has been embedded well at the school. The school council and various eco activities is proof of this. The school provides rich opportunities to enable pupils to take part in a variety of initiatives that develop their understanding of sustainability in addition to their awareness of the value of helping those who are less fortunate than them. The school has won the Green Flag for the second time. Through planning activities to promote enterprise, nearly all pupils solve problems and develop thinking skills across the curriculum.

Provision for the Welsh dimension is developed increasingly throughout the school.

Teaching: Adequate

There is an active and happy ethos at the school and a feeling of respect is evident in classrooms. In the majority of lessons, questioning is good and extends pupils' understanding in a positive learning environment.

In less effective lessons, teachers' planning is not detailed enough. In these lessons, tasks do not differentiate sufficiently to meet the needs of individual pupils. The pace of lessons is too slow and pupils are not challenged enough to achieve higher standards. As a result, most pupils are over-reliant on teachers' guidance and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their work, their knowledge and their independence when learning.

Arrangements for marking pupils' work is not analytical enough and written comments do not identify what they need to do to improve. Recently, the school has introduced arrangements to enable pupils to assess their own work. It has also adopted arrangements to set individual targets for pupils. It is too early to evaluate the effect of these developments on standards and they are not fully operational in all classrooms. The system of levelling and moderating pupils' work is beginning to improve teachers' understanding of national curriculum levels.

Classroom assistants give good support to all pupils, and co-operate effectively with class teachers. All teaching staff, including support staff, use behaviour management strategies effectively. Reports to parents meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Ferryside School is a close, warm and inclusive society that offers special care to its school.

Pupils are encouraged to express an opinion regularly, to contribute effectively to developments within the school and to be involved with a variety of activities in the local community. Across the school, learning experiences offer stimulating opportunities to promote learners' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The school promotes healthy eating and developing healthy ways of living. Opportunities are given to pupils to take responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their fellow pupils and they take pride in their roles. Pupils have a strong awareness of their responsibilities towards society and their role as conscientious citizens. This is a strength at the school.

The school has appropriate procedures and policy for safeguarding. This includes suitable arrangements for recruiting, disciplining and ensuring the suitability of staff and volunteers.

The school has effective systems for identifying and supporting pupils who have additional learning needs. A variety of stimulating programmes is used and pupils' individual education plans are reviewed appropriately. Induction arrangements for new pupils and transition arrangements with secondary schools are effective.

The school's systems for promoting attendance and punctuality are effective.

Learning environment: Good

There is a happy and homely ethos at the school. There is an inclusive feeling that encourages pupils to give of their best. Pupils appreciate the care and opportunities that are offered to them and they show respect for their teachers and visitors.

The school's procedures and policies are in place to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and these promote equality and social diversity. These policies are known to the whole staff and they are updated consistently as necessary.

There are varied and colourful displays of pupils' work and successes in classrooms and along the school's corridors. There are adequate resources in order to meet the curriculum's needs. However, the site and learning areas have not been developed suitably in order to implement the principles of the Foundation Phase fully. The building has been adapted in recent years in order to ensure accessibility for all. Pupils benefit from arrangements for using the nearby village hall as an additional resource for events and physical education lessons. The school's site is clean and well maintained.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

The headteacher has determined important aspects for improvement on the basis of thorough analyses of data that include comparing the school's performance with similar schools and results of reading tests. Priorities focus appropriately on raising standards of literacy and improving pupils' achievements. In addition, in a comparatively short period, developments linked with aspects such as assessment for learning and Welsh have begun to have an effect on important aspects of provision. However, the school's leadership over time has not had a sufficient effect on improving quality of teaching in classrooms.

Other members of staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of priorities for improvement. Regular staff meetings focus appropriately on improving aspects of provision. However, records do not identify the main decisions that have been made and the actions agreed upon.

Appropriate curricular responsibilities have been shared between members of staff. This has led to a review of the provision for information and communication technology. However, in general, the co-ordinators' work has not had enough of an effect on the quality of the curriculum and standards.

Some members of the governing body visit the school regularly to help with reading development and visit classrooms in order to observe work. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the way in which the school's performance compares with that of similar schools. This enables them to operate suitably as critical friends and contribute to determining priorities and reviewing progress. The governing body has produced a useful self-evaluation of the way in which it discharges its functions.

The work of promoting Welsh and raising standards of literacy, as well as the commitment to work jointly with other schools, testifies to the attention that is given to national priorities. The principles of the Foundation Phase have not had enough of an effect on the quality of provision for the youngest children.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has a suitable monitoring programme for self-evaluation. The school has introduced arrangements for observing teaching in classrooms and for examining pupils' books. However, the outcomes of these arrangements are not detailed and probing enough to identify priorities for improvement. The school does not have formal arrangements for collecting and analysing pupils' and parents' views regularly.

The school's self-evaluation report is a comprehensive document that encompasses a range of aspects. It offers evaluations and identifies appropriate aspects where improvement is needed. However, the report does not offer an accurate enough picture of the quality of teaching and assessment for learning across the school and provision for developing literacy skills.

There is a close link between aspects to be improved in the self-evaluation and the school development plan, which contains appropriate priorities for the next three years. The plan provides appropriate details about short-term objectives, along with

appropriate actions and time limits. For most of the priorities, appropriate quantitative targets have been determined in order to facilitate a review of progress.

The school has not made enough progress in addressing the recommendations of the last inspection.

There is a strong commitment to co-operation with other local schools for developing aspects of provision. It is also developing appropriately as a learning community in relation to raising standards of literacy. The school has not yet established links with other schools in the family of similar schools.

Partnership working: Good

The school co-operates appropriately with a range of partners in relation to curricular experiences and promoting pupils' wellbeing.

A strong relationship has been established with parents, who are very supportive of the school. Beneficial evenings have been held in order to develop the parents' understanding of matters concerning their children's education. The school has developed a new website which is an effective means of conveying current and useful information about the school's work.

The school co-operates effectively with local secondary schools in relation to transfer arrangements and transition plans. There are strong links with the local nursery group, which includes opportunities for nursery children to join the youngest children when there is a visitor to the school.

The school takes advantage of visits from the fire service, the school nurse and police officers. It also co-operates with an agency which promotes the world of work, in addition to local businesses, in order to promote pupils' understanding of enterprise and the business world.

Resource management: Adequate

The school makes full use of the resources that the building offers, and takes advantage of the village hall to hold concerts. It also uses the hall and adults' expertise for physical education lessons for key stage 2 pupils. The outdoor site has not been developed sufficiently for implementing the Foundation Phase in full.

There are appropriate arrangements for managing the performance of teaching staff, which include setting appropriate targets for them. There are no performance management arrangements for support staff.

The school development plan earmarks specific sums for implementing objectives. The governing body monitors expenditure regularly and has taken reasonable steps to decrease over-expenditure following the recent decrease in pupil numbers.

Considering the outcomes and the quality of provision, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Trends in the school's performance data should be considered with care as the number of pupils at the end of both phases is very small.

The Foundation Phase

As this is the first year of publishing Foundation Phase data, there is no trend data available. By the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, the results for pupils at the expected level (outcome 5 or higher) in the Foundation Phase outcome indicator were a little lower than average of other schools in the family. Pupils' achievements in English language, literacy and communication, were considerably higher than the averages for the family of schools and the whole of Wales. Their results in Welsh were also higher than the family average. In mathematical development, in addition to personal and social development, pupils' results were also higher than the averages for the family of schools and the whole of Wales.

However, no pupils attained a higher level than expected (outcome 6) in any of the learning areas.

The differences between the performance of boys and girls who achieve outcome 5 vary. Boys achieve better than girls in mathematical development, which is contrary to the national picture. On the other hand, girls perform higher than boys in language development, literacy and communication.

Key stage 2

The proportion of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher in Welsh or English, mathematics and science have been equal to or higher than the averages for the family and the averages for schools in Wales in four of the last five years.

In 2012, pupils' achievement at level 4 in all core subjects was much higher than the averages for the family and schools in Wales.

Pupils' performance over the last five years has been inconsistent. For the last two years, results in English and Welsh have placed the school among the lower 50% of schools in Wales. Pupils' results made considerable progress in 2012. In comparison with schools with a similar percentage of pupils who receive free school meals, pupils' attainment in English, Welsh, mathematics and science has placed the school among the top 25% in the group. Science has placed it among the top 25% for the last five years. All children attained level 4 in oracy and reading in English and Welsh, and standards of writing were a little lower.

The percentage of pupils who achieved a level higher than expected (level 5) has also been inconsistent over the last four years. In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher level was higher than the average for the family and the whole of Wales in English, mathematics and science. No children have reached

level 5 in Welsh since 2008. When comparing the school's achievement with that of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's achievement at level 5 has varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% over the previous four years in all core subjects. There are no differences over time in the relative achievement levels of boys and girls.

It is not possible to compare the achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals with the remainder over time as there are no such pupils in a number of the years over the last five years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Twenty pupils responded to the questionnaire. Nearly all responses are very positive and there are no characteristic differences between the responses of boys and girls. In general, most of the positive responses were higher than the average for primary schools in Wales.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school, and believe that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. If they find their work difficult, all pupils know what to do, and with whom to speak. In cases of bullying, many pupils are confident that the school deals well with every case and many know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious. Nearly all pupils believe that they are doing well at school, and that they have enough books, equipment and computers in order to do their work. However, a very few pupils believe that the homework that is set does not help them to understand their work at school.

Nearly all say that other children behave well and that they are able to do their work. All believe that other children behave well at play-time and lunch-time. Many of them believe that the school teaches them to keep healthy and that there are many opportunities for regular physical exercise at school.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eighteen answers were received to the parent questionnaires. Nearly all parents express high levels of satisfaction with the school. The proportion of positive responses in almost all cases is considerably higher than national comparisons.

All parents believe that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best. Nearly all believe strongly that their children are treated with respect and many believe that their children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any individual needs.

Nearly all agree that the school is led effectively, and are happy with the quality of teaching. Nearly all are satisfied with children's behaviour at the school and agree

that the school helps their children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility. Nearly all also feel that homework builds adequately on the work that is done at school.

A few parents believe that they do not receive enough information about their child's progress. Nearly all parents understand the school's system for making a complaint, and indicate that they feel comfortable in asking a question at the school, making suggestions or identifying a problem.

Nearly all parents say that their children like school and are making good progress, and that the staff have helped them to settle in well when they start school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dyfrig Wyn Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Iolo Dafydd	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Diane Ebo	Peer Inspector
Rayanne Rogers	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.