



*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 Beca  
Efailwen  
Clunderwen  
Carmarthenshire  
SA66 7UX**

**Date of inspection: December 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:

<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

This rural school is situated in the village of Efailwen in the west of Carmarthenshire on the boundary with Pembrokeshire. It serves the village and the local area. The school describes the area as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is considerably lower than the county and national figure.

There are thirty-eight pupils between three and 11 years old on roll. Pupil numbers have declined over recent years. Twenty-one per cent of pupils receive additional learning needs support, which is higher than the county and national figure. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs.

The area that is served by the school is a traditionally Welsh speaking area and 45% of pupils speak Welsh at home. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds at the school at present.

The headteacher has been in post since January 2009.

The last inspection was conducted in September 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Beca in 2012-2013 is £4,074. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £25,997 and the minimum is £3,005. Ysgol Beca is in 31st place of the 107 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of school budget per pupil.

## 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:

- most pupils make appropriate progress during their period at the school;
- pupils behave very well and show good attitudes towards learning;
- the wide range of experiences that are provided enriches pupils' learning;
- teaching is good on the whole;
- the school is an inclusive community and has a homely and caring ethos; and
- partnerships contribute effectively towards pupils' education and welfare.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a strong vision that is based on raising standards;
- there is a team of dedicated teaching and support staff;
- self-evaluation procedures influence the development plan effectively;
- there is evidence of improvement in the quality of provision and standards of achievement; and
- the governing body operates effectively and has a positive effect on the school's development.

## Recommendations

R1 Strengthen the writing skills of key stage 2 pupils

R2 Improve provision for extending pupils' reading skills across the school

R3 Ensure that tasks provide a consistent and appropriate challenge to pupils

R4 Extend the opportunities for pupils to reflect on their progress and to take steps to improve the standard of their work

### What happens next?

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

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

In 2012, pupils' achievement at the end of the Foundation Phase was higher than the average for the family of similar schools in most learning areas. It was however a little below the family average in language, literacy and communication. Over the last four years, there is a clear trend of improvement in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2. In 2012, pupils' achievement was higher than the family of similar schools average in Welsh, mathematics and science but lower in English.

In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase was lower than the family of schools average in most areas. At the end of key stage 2, the percentage who achieved higher levels was better than the family average in most subjects. Over the previous three years, the percentages had been generally lower in Welsh, English and science.

There is no consistent pattern in the difference between boys' and girls' results although girls at the end of key stage 2 achieve better in general than boys, especially at the higher levels. Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress and achieve their targets.

Across the school, pupils' listening skills are very good. Most pupils communicate confidently in oral Welsh when discussing their work and informally in a variety of situations. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils communicate clearly in English, using appropriate vocabulary. In general, pupils do not contribute at enough length when answering questions and expressing an opinion.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils read accurately, using appropriate expression when reading aloud. In key stage 2, the majority of older pupils read meaningfully in Welsh and English. Pupils' reading skills at the beginning of key stage 2 are more uneven, particularly in Welsh. In general, they do not read with enough fluency and understanding.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils write independently with increasing accuracy. In key stage 2, pupils write appropriately for a range of purposes in Welsh and English. However, a majority of pupils' grasp of spelling and punctuation skills is insecure and their handwriting is often untidy. In general, pupils do not produce enough pieces of extended writing.

Across the school, the majority of pupils use their thinking skills and research skills purposefully in their work across subjects. They recall their previous learning appropriately and many use their information and communication technology skills and their number skills effectively to support their learning.

## **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils are happy and safe at school. They are courteous and show respect for each other and for teachers. They have a firm understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of taking regular physical exercise.

Pupils' attendance over the last three years varies between the top 25% and the top 50% in comparison with levels in similar schools. All pupils are punctual.

Most pupils show great interest in their learning. They keep to a task and co-operate productively with others. All pupils behave very well in class and around the school.

Most pupils play an active part in school life. Members of the school council and the eco committee foster leadership skills and contribute effectively towards decision-making processes within school life.

All pupils expand their social and personal skills effectively through the school's daily programme and by taking part in services, concerts and community activities.

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

The school offers a wide and balanced curriculum, which meets the requirements of the national curriculum and the Foundation Phase. Teachers plan carefully and provide a wide range of learning activities that gain pupils' interest. Short-term planning does not ensure that tasks always offer an appropriate challenge to pupils.

Detailed and comprehensive schemes of work indicate clearly the opportunities to develop pupils' skills but provision does not ensure that pupils' writing and reading skills develop consistently.

Welsh is the natural medium for the school's life and work, which promotes pupils' bilingual proficiency successfully. Through thematic work, visits and opportunities to compete in eisteddfodau, pupils have good opportunities to learn about their area and about Welsh history and culture.

Education for global citizenship is a strength in the school. Links with foreign countries prepare pupils well for becoming responsible and knowledgeable members of a wider community. Pupils are encouraged to learn about other cultures, to share their culture and to take pride in it.

Through a wide range of appropriate activities, pupils have an opportunity to learn how to live in a sustainable way. The eco council works effectively with pupils across the school to encourage recycling and reduce waste.

## **Teaching: Good**

Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is reflected in the detailed planning for lessons. In most sessions, teaching is effective. In these sessions, there is detailed planning, effective organisation, lively presentations, probing questioning, and regular opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in groups. The warm working relationship between teachers and pupils promotes purposeful interaction which stimulates learning. Support staff are used productively within classes and in a range of other activities across the school.

In the very few sessions in which teaching is less effective, presentations are too long and tasks do not offer an appropriate challenge to extend pupils' learning.

The school has appropriate arrangements for assessing, monitoring and recording pupils' progress. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers offer detailed feedback, both oral and written, which directs pupils to identify their next steps. However, opportunities for them to act upon improving their own work and to reflect on their progress are uneven. There are suitable arrangements for standardising and moderating teachers' assessments.

Reports for parents offer full information about their children's progress and they meet statutory requirements.

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

The school is a caring community and there are effective arrangements for supporting pupils' health and wellbeing. A range of successful initiatives is promoted to encourage eating healthily and undertaking regular physical exercise.

There is effective provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship sessions and a personal and social education programme contribute well to these areas. There is a positive attitude towards being a part of the local community, and through charitable activities pupils have an opportunity to support people within their local community and the wider world.

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

The school has suitable procedures for identifying and monitoring pupils who have additional learning needs. Each one has an individual education plan that includes clear targets for the way forward. They are reviewed regularly and updated following consultation with pupils and their parents. The school identifies more able and talented pupils and there are examples of them being challenged effectively but this is not a consistent feature across the curriculum.

Effective contact arrangements with a range of support services, including an educational psychologist, a nurse and specialist teachers, ensure that information and guidance are available for pupils, staff and parents as needed.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a very inclusive and happy community and has a family ethos. The close co-operation between all the school's staff and pupils creates a warm and industrious learning environment. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to all areas of provision. Clear emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

The building offers a range of classrooms and learning areas and full use is made of them to stimulate and promote pupils' learning. Colourful and interesting displays around the school give pupils an opportunity to take pride in showing their work to others. Staff and pupils make good use of the wide range of resources to support learning.

Outdoor areas are extensive but have been designated for various activities that offer an attractive environment for pupils. The Foundation Phase outdoor learning area is used effectively to develop pupils' skills across the learning areas.

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

The headteacher offers firm strategic direction that is based on improving standards and the quality of provision for pupils. The teaching team works together effectively to develop activities and ways of learning and teaching that have a positive influence on pupils' achievement. They make effective use of data analysis to measure pupils' progress and to prioritise aspects for further attention.

The responsibilities and roles of all members of the teaching team have been defined clearly, including leading and supporting curricular areas and skills. All staff are committed to their role in fulfilling the school's objectives.

The governing body has a good understanding of how the school is performing in comparison with similar schools. Through collecting subject information, monitoring visits and analysing a wide range of data, they challenge and support the school in order to raise standards further. Statutory policies, documents and procedures meet requirements.

The school has selected a number of local and national initiatives that contribute positively towards raising standards. They include initiatives to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and to extend provision in the Foundation Phase further.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation processes and high expectations among teachers and governors have a positive influence on promoting higher standards across the school.

The self-evaluation report is clear and analytical. A wide range of evidence is used to support judgements including performance data, parents' and pupils' views, monitoring work, observing classes and the views of local authority improvement officers.

The development plan is an operational document and priorities match issues that are identified in the self-evaluation. Measurable targets and a specific budget are set to ensure improvement.

The process of monitoring the curriculum and skills contributes positively to the process of raising standards. Appropriate emphasis is placed on monitoring standards in addition to provision, and issues to be developed are evaluated carefully by the headteacher and the governing body.

The school is developing a number of internal professional learning communities and as members of a cluster of local schools. This has a positive influence on the school's practices and standards, especially when developing standards of literacy, disseminating good practice in terms of teaching and learning, and promoting wellbeing education.



### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has very strong partnerships with parents and the community. Extensive use is made of local specialisms and advantage is taken of all possible opportunities to use them for pupils' benefit, raise standards and ensure a stimulating and safe learning environment. As a part of an established programme, constructive use is made of the contribution of individuals from the community to promote pupils' reading skills, and the monthly lunch for the elderly raises their awareness of the importance of caring for others.

The school has an effective range of strategic partners including local authority improvement officers, pupil support specialists and athrawon bro who help the school to develop further.

There are effective transition arrangements for children who transfer from the cylch meithrin to the primary school and for pupils who are about to transfer to the secondary school. Arrangements are of great assistance for pupils to settle in quickly in their new environment.

There are productive links with the family of local schools in order to structure and implement further professional development programmes, share expertise and moderate work at the end of a key stage. Arrangements to pool funding and resources jointly within the area promote these activities effectively.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school is staffed appropriately and good use is made of teachers' experience and expertise to deliver the curriculum. Great emphasis is placed on the continuous professional development of teaching and support staff and appropriate performance management processes promote this further. Teachers and teaching assistants work together and support each other effectively.

The school meets requirements relating to teachers' workload. Teachers make effective use of their non-contact time for planning, preparation and assessment of pupils' work and to observe good practice.

The school building and site are well maintained. The school invests in appropriate resources in order to maintain educational standards and renews them as needed. However, the library has not been organised sufficiently to promote pupils' extended reading skills and research skills.

The governing body and the headteacher work together efficiently to manage funding. There are appropriate procedures for ensuring that funding and resources are provided for promoting pupils' development and supporting the priorities identified in the school development plan.

The positive outcomes that can be seen at the end of both key stages are evidence of the good value for money that is provided by the school.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

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

In 2012, the percentage of pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase who achieved the expected levels was higher than the averages for the family of similar schools in mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. Pupils' achievement in language, literacy and communication was a little below the family average.

In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, results placed the school among the top 25% in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, and mathematical development and in the bottom 25% in language, literacy and communication skills.

In three of the last four years, pupils' results at the end of key stage 2 have been higher than the family of schools average in Welsh, mathematics and science. They have been more uneven in English and generally lower than the averages for the family.

In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, results have placed the school among the top 25% in mathematics and science, in the top 50% in Welsh, and in the bottom 25% in English in most years.

The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012 was better than the average for the family of schools in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity but lower in other areas. At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils that achieved higher levels in 2012 was better than the family's averages in Welsh, English and mathematics but lower in science. Except in mathematics, results in previous years had been lower across the subjects.

There is no consistent pattern in the difference between the results for boys and girls. However, in general, girls achieve better at the end of key stage 2, especially at the higher levels. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress and achieve their targets. Because of very small numbers, it is not possible to compare the achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not.

Over the last four years, pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2 in their Welsh oral and reading skills has compared favourably with the family average in the majority of years. English reading and oral skills are more uneven. Pupils' Welsh and English writing skills have been lower than the family average in most years.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

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

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

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

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

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

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Margaret Davies	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Meriel Parry	Peer Inspector
Eirwyn Griffiths	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))

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 it is 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. FYear 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