



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 Gwynfryn
Pontyates
Llanelli
SA15 5SN**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Ysgol Gwynfryn is situated in the village of Pontyates, in the Gwendraeth Valley, Carmarthenshire. Most pupils live in the village and in the rural area nearby. The school describes the area as comparatively disadvantaged economically and socially. Forty-one per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is much higher than the averages for the local authority and Wales.

There are 64 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11. Pupils are admitted full-time to the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they are four years old. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

Thirty per cent of pupils are from homes where Welsh is spoken as a first language. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning and the aim is to ensure that all pupils are fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2.

The school has designated 32% of pupils as those who have additional learning needs; a figure that is significantly higher than the averages of the local authority and Wales. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The school operates as a federal school in close co-operation with a nearby school and shares staff expertise and resources. The headteacher has been in post since January 2011.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gwynfryn in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,724 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £18,947 and the minimum is £3,114. Ysgol Gwynfryn is in 39th position out of the 110 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make appropriate progress during their time at the school;
- the results of end of key-stage assessments compare favourably over time with those of similar schools;
- pupils behave well and enjoy their learning;
- a good range of interesting experiences across the curriculum is offered; and
- a caring learning atmosphere that promotes pupils' wellbeing effectively is provided.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because of:

- the headteacher's strong vision and leadership;
- staff sharing the same values and co-operating closely as a team;
- the effective use of evaluation procedures that influence the improvement plan consistently;
- skilful use of teachers' subject expertise that enriches the provision; and
- a governing body that provides a robust strategic direction and undertakes its responsibilities effectively.

Recommendations

In order to develop further the school needs to:

- R1 improve the achievement of more able pupils at the end of both key stages;
- R2 extend pupils' oral Welsh skills across the school, and strengthen pupils' reading skills in the Foundation Phase;
- R3 ensure that tasks always meet the needs of less able pupils in key stage 2;
- R4 develop assessment for learning strategies across the school; and
- R5 improve the quality of oral and written feedback given to pupils.

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

Teachers' assessment results must be treated with care because the small numbers of pupils in a year and the high percentage of pupils with additional learning needs can affect the school's performance significantly from one year to the next.

During their time at the school, most pupils make appropriate progress in their learning.

Over a period of four years, the percentage of seven-year-old pupils who achieve the expected levels is generally higher than the average for the family of similar schools. The results for 11-year-old pupils are as good as or higher than family averages in English and mathematics. They are more uneven in Welsh and science.

In comparison with the results for the family, the achievement of more able pupils is uneven. Over a period, the school's results in general compare favourably with those of similar schools in terms of the percentage who are entitled to free school meals. They are more uneven in Welsh in the Foundation Phase.

There is no consistent pattern in the difference between the results for boys and girls at the end of the key stages. Pupils with additional learning needs are making appropriate and at times good progress. In general, the pupils who receive free school meals do not achieve as well as their peers.

The majority of pupils listen well and can recall previous learning effectively. Across the classes, a minority of pupils speak confidently about their work, expressing themselves clearly and accurately. In general, pupils do not contribute at sufficient length when answering questions and expressing an opinion.

Within the wide range of ability, the majority of pupils are making good progress in reading. In the Foundation Phase, a minority of pupils reads confidently with good expression. In general, pupils do not read with sufficient fluency and understanding. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils read aloud accurately and meaningfully.

On the whole, pupils' writing skills are developing well. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase write independently, beginning to vary sentences and punctuating correctly. In key stage 2, most pupils are increasingly writing for a range of purposes. The majority write comparatively accurately, varying sentences and paragraphing appropriately.

By the end of key stage 2, the English skills of the majority of pupils are good. They discuss confidently, read meaningfully and write accurately in general.

Across the school, most pupils make good use of their information technology and communication skills. There are some very good features in the work of key stage 2

pupils and many pupils use a range of skills confidently. Most pupils use their number skills effectively in their work across the subjects. In general, they make good use of their thinking skills and research skills to assist them with their topic work. The standard of handwriting and presentation of work of key stage 2 pupils is uneven and a minority write neatly consistently.

Wellbeing: Good

In general, pupils feel safe at school. They are courteous and respectful towards one another and towards adults. They have a strong understanding of, and positive attitudes towards eating healthily, and of the value of physical exercise and fitness.

Many pupils show great interest in their learning. They co-operate productively with others and they strive well to complete tasks to the best of their ability. All pupils behave well.

Most pupils play an active part in school life. Members of the school council, the eco committee and prefects contribute effectively to decisions on a range of issues such as creating school rules.

Pupils' attendance over the last three years is in the top 25% in comparison with that of similar schools. Most pupils are punctual.

All pupils extend their social and personal skills consistently by working with other pupils, and taking part in concerts, eisteddfodau and community activities.

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

The school provides a broad curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Teachers plan a range of learning experiences that capture pupils' interest. Although planning is detailed, there is no consistent attention to the learning needs of the full ability range in the classes, especially in key stage 2.

Skills have a prominent place in planning and the provision ensures appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop them across the curriculum. Very effective use is made of information and communications technology resources to enrich pupils' learning.

Provision for developing the Welsh language enables pupils to make consistent progress. They are given suitable opportunities to learn about their local area and Wales through various aspects of the curriculum. The visits to places of educational interest and various other activities enrich and extend the curriculum and contribute appropriately to their learning experiences.

The activities of the eco committee, recycling processes and the project to renew the garden promote pupils' knowledge of the importance of sustainability and protecting the environment effectively. Good opportunities are provided for them to extend their

experiences as world-wide citizens through the range of constructive links with other schools in Europe.

Teaching: Good

The standard of teaching is good overall. All teachers have good subject knowledge. This is reflected in the planning and in their use of robust subject skills in leading the learning. There is a good working relationship between teacher and pupil, and the classroom assistants make an effective contribution to learning across the school.

In most sessions where teaching is effective, pupils are motivated and their interest maintained through good use of a range of teaching methods and stimulating resources. There is a clear focus on building on previous work, probing questioning and appropriate opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups.

In the very few sessions where teaching is less effective, neither the tasks nor the organisation correspond sufficiently to the needs of less able pupils, and there is over-dependence on work sheets.

The school has effective arrangements for assessing, monitoring and recording pupils' progress. Pupils' work is marked regularly. However, sufficient attention is not always paid to providing clear feedback that will help them improve the standard of their work. The reports to parents offer full information about their children's progress.

The teachers have embedded some assessment for learning strategies in their practice in the classroom. In general, there is not sufficient planning to ensure opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work and measure their progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community and effective arrangements exist for supporting pupils' health and well-being. A wide range of initiatives is promoted to encourage healthy eating and regular physical exercise. There is close co-operation between the school and external agencies to provide additional support for pupils as needed.

The school uses detailed processes to identify and monitor the progress of pupils with additional learning needs. The individual education plans are appropriate and are reviewed regularly. Parents have an active role in the process. A range of intervention programmes is provided which are improving pupils' literacy skills across the school.

There is effective provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through visits and projects, a range of creative and culturally valuable experience is provided for pupils. The collective worship sessions contribute significantly to the caring atmosphere at the school.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding. All members of staff have had training and they are aware of their responsibilities.

Learning environment: Good

The school's inclusive ethos promotes equal opportunities for every pupil to take advantage of the full range of educational provision. Pupils' awareness of equality and diversity is developed effectively. Curriculum provision, personal and social education programmes and fund raising for good causes contribute to this consistently.

There is effective use of all resources to support teaching and learning. There are enough experienced staff and the school makes full use of their expertise to enrich the curriculum. The buildings are maintained well and, despite their age, provide an appropriate learning environment. On the whole, good use is made of the outside areas. The displays across the school are colourful and give prominence to pupils' work.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, and conveys this vision successfully to staff and pupils, giving an appropriate strategic direction to the life and work of the school. The headteacher and the rest of the staff co-operate effectively in a way that influences the provision and pupils' achievements positively.

Under the guidance of an experienced chair, the governing body has a good knowledge of the school. The vision and confidence to take advantage of the federalisation system in order to develop the school further is an excellent feature.

The governors fulfil their duties conscientiously. They have a good awareness of the school's performance data over time, and their role in the self-evaluation process is developing effectively. They have not fully addressed challenging the achievements of the most able pupils.

The school gives due attention to national and local priorities. Professional learning communities are being created in partnership with other schools in the cluster. This structure promotes staff development by offering opportunities for them to share good practice and create learning resources jointly. The school has embedded the principles of the Foundation Phase successfully.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation report is of good quality and clearly indicates the areas for development. The school has made every effort to include the opinions of staff, governors, parents, pupils and the community in the process.

The school's self-evaluation systems are thorough. They include analysing data, observing lessons and evaluating pupils' work. The outcomes of this process have a direct influence on the priorities in the school improvement plan. The improvement plan is specific and succinct. It also sets a clear framework for improving the quality of provision and raising pupils' standards further.

Teachers belong to a number of networks of professional practice with the federation school, cluster schools, the secondary school and the family of schools. Internally, the school holds regular meetings to discuss and share good practice in teaching and learning. These networks influence the provision positively across the school.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a range of strategic partnerships that extend the provision and contribute to raising pupils' standards.

The school works successfully with parents and carers, and responses to the questionnaires confirm this. They contribute actively to a range of activities to raise money and ensure improvements to the site.

The school makes constructive use of the community and community resources. Members of the community work effectively with pupils on aspects of their themes such as life in the nineteen sixties. This contributes well towards their understanding of life in their community.

The school co-operates extensively with other schools in the cluster for training, sharing good practice and in order to standardise and moderate teachers' assessments. There is also very effective co-operation with the partner school that is part of the recent federalisation developments.

Successful transition arrangements exist between the school and the local secondary schools and pupils benefit from various transition activities. The link with the Cylchoedd Meithrin that feed the school facilitates children's smooth transition. The school has a good partnership with the local authority that facilitates the process of developing the school further.

Resource management: Good

Following the recent arrangements for federalisation, the school faces considerable change. The headteacher, the governors and staff have responded very well to the opportunities to expand the curriculum further by using staff expertise and learning resources. Teachers' continuous professional development is supported by an appropriate performance management system that sets relevant targets for improvement within the context of the school. Regular opportunities are provided for the assistants to develop their skills through regular training.

The arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment sessions have a positive influence on standards and on the quality of planning and assessment in general.

The headteacher and governors monitor the budget regularly. They manage the supply of resources available for all the school's needs effectively, ensuring that full use is made of them.

When considering the outcomes over time, and the purposeful use of the finance that is available, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

It is necessary to treat teachers' assessments on seven-year-old pupils in the Foundation Phase, and on 11-year-old pupils in key stage 2, with care. The small numbers of pupils in a year and the substantial percentage of pupils with additional learning needs can have a considerable effect on the school's performance from one year to the next.

When they start at the school, a minority of pupils have skills that are generally lower than those expected of pupils of a similar age.

In the Foundation Phase, the percentage of pupils who attained the core subject indicator (level 2 in a combination of the core subjects, namely Welsh, mathematics and science) has been higher than the family of schools, the local authority and all-Wales averages in three of the last four years. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 2 in Welsh, mathematics and science separately has been uneven and shows a downward trend. However, the results compare favourably with those of the family in most years. The results in 2011 were affected considerably by the high percentage of pupils with additional learning needs, namely 46%, in Year 2.

In key stage 2, results for 11-year-old pupils in terms of the core subject indicator have been consistently higher than those of the family, and higher than the averages for the local authority in two out of the last four years. In 2011, there was a decline in the results. Thirty-one per cent of pupils in the year group were designated as having additional learning needs. With the exception of the results in 2011, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in Welsh, English and mathematics separately has been consistently higher than the averages for the family. It has been more uneven in science.

When comparing with the performance levels of similar schools across Wales in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the results for seven-year-old pupils in terms of the core subject indicator are favourable. They have placed the school among the top 25% in three of the last four years. In key stage 2, pupils' results in terms of the core subject indicator have varied over the last four years. They were in the top 25% in two of the four years.

Over four years, the percentage of pupils who attained level 3 in Welsh, mathematics and science has been higher than the family average in two of the last four years. In mathematics and science, the percentages have been consistently lower than the averages for the local authority and for Wales. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5 has been uneven but also higher than the family average in at least two of the last four years. With the exception of English, the percentage has been consistently lower than the average percentages for the local authority and for Wales.

There is no consistent pattern in the difference between the results for boys and girls although there are some obvious variations in some years. In the Foundation Phase, on the whole, girls achieve better than boys. In 2011, there was a considerable gap,

and girls achieved much better than boys. In key stage 2, the pattern is more uneven in terms of the percentage of pupils who achieve levels 4 and 5. In 2011, boys achieved better in terms of level 4 in every subject but no boys achieved level 5.

In the teachers' assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase, the percentage who achieved the expected level in Welsh oral work, reading and writing has compared favourably over time with the averages for the family. In the 2011 assessments, the results were lower than those of the family. In key stage 2, oral and written standards in Welsh and English across the years have been more uneven in comparison with those of the family. In 2011, English oral and written standards were similar to those of the family but were lower in reading. In terms of Welsh written work, they were similar to the family averages but lower in oral work and reading.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-five questionnaires were completed by parents. Nearly all are satisfied with the school. They say that their children like the 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 are making appropriate progress. They say that teachers expect their children to work hard and that the school provides additional support to pupils with any specific individual needs. They 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 in their education. They feel that their children are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise. They receive regular information on their children's progress and feel comfortable in discussing anything with the school. Most are of the opinion that the school offers a good variety of activities. Nearly all are of the opinion that the school is well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

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

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Prydwen Elfed-Owens	Team Inspector
Veronica Tudor Williams	Lay Inspector
Amanda Bowen-Price	Peer Inspector
Rhian Evans	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority. If 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. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.