



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 Gymraeg Nant Caerau
Caerau Lane
Ely
Cardiff
CF5 5QZ**

Date of inspection: May 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 Nant Caerau is a Welsh-medium community school, which serves the areas of Caerau and Culverhouse Cross in Cardiff. Some pupils from the Ely and Fairwater areas also attend the school. The area is one that is described, on the whole, as being under social and economic disadvantage. Forty-five point eight per cent (45.8%) of pupils live in areas that are among the 20% most disadvantaged in Wales.

The school was established originally in September 2007 as a Cefn Coed starter class. In September 2010 the starter class moved to its present site in Caerau and was established as an independent school. At present, the school shares a building and site with two classes from a nearby English-medium school. In July 2012, the whole site will be in the care of Ysgol Nant Caerau.

There are 86 full-time pupils from reception age up to Year 4 at the school, and 32 part-time nursery pupils. They are taught in five classes. A significant growth in numbers of pupils is predicted during the years to come.

Twenty-nine per cent of pupils receive free school meals, which is higher than the national figure. Twenty-five per cent are on the additional learning needs register but no children have statements. No pupils have been excluded from the school.

Child foundation assessments and profile assessments show that pupils' achievements on starting school are lower than expected for children of this age.

English is pupils' main home language. One pupil comes from a Welsh-speaking home and about six pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken by one parent. Nine pupils (7.6%) come from a minority ethnic background.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Caerau in 2011-2012 is £6,335. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Cardiff is £19,708 and the minimum is £2,828. Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Caerau is in fifth place out of the 116 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of the school budget per pupil.

This is the school's first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- pupils' standards of attainment in lessons and in their work books are consistently good;
- pupils are making progress that is as good as, or better than expected;
- most pupils communicate confidently in Welsh from an early age, although almost all of them come from homes where English is spoken as a first language;
- provision for care, support and guidance is of good quality, and
- the quality of teaching in every class is good.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher's leadership is strong;
- school leaders' clear vision is shared effectively with all staff and parents;
- the senior management team and governors have acted very effectively to put the school on firm foundations since it was established;
- the school identifies shortcomings and raises standards in specific areas; and
- there are appropriate priorities for ensuring improvement in the school development plan.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 plan to develop key skills in a structured way across the school;
- R2 ensure that the self-evaluation process leads to evaluative outcomes that are based on firm evidence, and leads to setting appropriate priorities for the school development plan;
- R3 develop the governing body's understanding of performance in order to challenge the school more effectively; and
- R4 ensure that the school prospectus fulfils the statutory requirements in full.

What happens next?

The school will prepare an action plan, showing how it will address the recommendations above. Progress against the recommendations will be monitored by the local authority.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school. Standards of pupils' work in their work books, and during the learning sessions, are proportionate to their age and ability.

Nearly all pupils are industrious during the sessions, and show interest in the activities. They can discuss their work intelligently and, by the end of key stage 2, most pupils develop into increasingly independent learners who can inform their own learning increasingly effectively.

Although nearly all learners come from homes where English is spoken as a first language, they nearly all, from an early age, communicate confidently orally in Welsh and English. They can converse clearly and enthusiastically about their work, using appropriate vocabulary. Usually, they choose to converse in Welsh with their friends in informal situations.

Most pupils are developing into effective readers. By the time they reach key stage 2, the majority can read fluently, correctly and intelligently in Welsh and English. They can discuss the content of books effectively, express an opinion on them, and use their reading skills effectively to obtain information for their work in different subjects. They write successfully in Welsh and in English across the range of subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress against the targets that are set for them, and take a full part in their class activities.

Only the results for assessments at the end of key stage 1 for two years are available. The cohorts of pupils were low during the two years, and it is difficult to come to meaningful conclusions based on the results. During the two years, one pupil represented 12.5% of the cohort.

Foundation assessments show that pupils' attainments, on the whole, are lower than those expected of children of their age on entry to the school. By the end of key stage 1, the school's tracking systems show that all pupils are making progress that is as good as, or better than expected.

Teachers' assessments in Years 3 and 4 show that pupils make very firm progress in the first years of key stage 2, exceeding an estimate based on teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 1.

Wellbeing: Good

Through classroom themes, pupils' understanding of living and keeping healthy is developing appropriately. An example of this is the way in which a number of pupils can discuss their lunch-boxes' nutritional content intelligently.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and when they are playing together in the yard, sharing resources and showing respect and care for one another.

Pupils' attendance places the school among the top 25% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

Nearly all children respond well in lessons and show enthusiasm towards their learning. In general, they persevere to complete tasks with increasing independence. Their thinking and problem-solving skills are developing effectively, and this is beginning to have an impact on the school's wider life through the work of the school council and the eco committee.

Good community links are beginning to develop, and the school is beginning to hold public concerts and visit a nearby centre for the elderly. The work of the school council is beginning to have an impact on the life and work of the school.

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

The school provides an appropriate curriculum for all its pupils. Detailed and imaginative planning and organisation across the school ensure that pupils have experience of a range of learning areas and subjects. Relevant activities provide extensive opportunities for pupils to use skills and reinforce learning. However, the school does not plan purposefully and consistently in order to develop key skills in a structured way across the school.

There is appropriate provision to enable pupils to learn about sustainability and global citizenship through thematic work, for example work on the rugby world cup and the Olympic Games. A link with schools across the world through the medium of information and communication technology is also beginning to contribute to pupils' understanding of this aspect.

Through the medium of the eco committee, the school is successful in encouraging pupils to save energy and to recycle. There is a prominent place for this activity at the school.

Provision for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is core to the curriculum. Termly visits to places such as the St Fagan's folk museum ensure an understanding of local and national culture.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is consistently good across the school and ensures motivation for pupils to apply themselves to learning. Teachers and assistants have strong subject knowledge and they use a range of methods and activities to inspire and challenge most pupils. All teachers have established a good relationship with pupils, which fosters effective learning.

In learning sessions, teachers differentiate very effectively, question probingly in order to promote pupils' learning, and use resources skilfully and imaginatively in order to enrich pupils' experiences. The pace of teaching is good, classroom organisation is robust and teachers have high expectations.

Robust and regular assessment procedures are in place, and outcomes are used effectively in order to identify pupils' needs, and to provide activities for them. Pupils receive constructive oral feedback on their efforts. Pupils' written work is marked regularly but the comments do not always do enough to show pupils what they need to do to improve.

The thorough method of tracking pupils' progress and wellbeing has a positive effect on pupils' progress. As a result, teachers plan stimulating lessons, in order to meet pupils' learning needs.

Appropriate assessment for learning techniques are in place in classes and contribute positively to pupils' progress and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.

The school provides comprehensive reports and information to parents on their children's achievements and development. There are appropriate opportunities for parents to contribute and share opinions about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy and supportive community that fosters values such as fairness and respect. Effective arrangements exist in order to promote pupils' health and wellbeing. The advantages of living healthily are promoted successfully across the curriculum.

Thorough and successful procedures ensure that pupils develop self-respect and feel safe in the school community. This is one of the strengths of the school. There are comprehensive systems that ensure thorough provision for the needs of every child.

Help and support are focused well and they contribute substantially to the quality of pupils' learning. The school ensures speedy intervention for pupils with special educational needs and pupils of higher ability. Effective use is made of external agencies in order to support this provision.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

The school pays particular attention to pupils' personal, emotional and educational needs. There is appropriate provision for pupils' spiritual development in joint worship sessions and the school promotes moral and cultural development successfully.

Learning environment: Good

The school creates a positive ethos of high quality. Respect permeates the whole school and this has a positive impact on pupils' standards of behaviour. This is a strength at the school.

The school is a very inclusive community and all pupils have an equal opportunity to take part in its activities. There are robust processes in place to ensure good behaviour.

During the two years since it was established, the school has targeted finance effectively in order to ensure a range of appropriate resources to enrich teaching and learning. In general, there are attractive displays in the classrooms and corridors that celebrate pupils' work and stimulate learning.

The building is accessible to all pupils and visitors and it is maintained to a high standard. It provides an appropriate learning and teaching environment for pupils and teachers.

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

Since the headteacher was appointed to lead the new school in September 2010, he has succeeded in conveying a clear vision to staff, pupils and governors. That vision focuses clearly on developing a school with an inclusive Welsh ethos, and insists on high standards. The headteacher knows the school well and leads it effectively with the support of the senior management team. All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and carry them out conscientiously.

The management team undertake their duties successfully and plan effectively for the school's growth over the next three years. They have ensured improvement in pupils' standards of achievement in specific areas. For example, records show that there has been significant progress in reading standards during the last year, and that writing standards are also improving.

The school has appropriate performance management arrangements that help the teaching staff and teaching assistants to improve their practices.

In the short time since they were appointed, the governors have developed a strong awareness of what happens at the school, and they are committed to its success. The governors' role as critical friends that challenge the school is beginning to develop. However, their understanding of the school's performance in comparison with similar schools has not been developed sufficiently.

The school fulfils national priorities successfully. Provision for the Foundation Phase is appropriate and assessment for learning is embedded well throughout the school. The school is establishing successful professional learning communities.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation process is robust and useful, and includes the opinions of staff, governors, parents and pupils. It pays appropriate attention to analysing data and some evidence that arises from monitoring lessons. As a result, the process identifies the school's strengths and gives a clear picture of the life and work of the school. The self-evaluation report summarises the outcomes of the process, but,

although it identifies the school's strengths, there is a tendency for it to be too descriptive.

On the whole, the school development plan is of good quality but the link between it and the self-evaluation report when determining targets is not clear in every area. It identifies appropriate priorities for improvement, and includes quantitative targets and a timetable for action, along with suitable success criteria. It does not use evidence from the self-evaluation process thoroughly enough to determine specific targets for improvement.

Teachers belong to a number of networks of professional practice and learning communities in order to develop literacy skills. These networks are beginning to have a positive influence on the provision and on pupils' achievement. For example, since establishing the school in September 2010, the school has identified literacy as a specific area for development and all the interventions and strategies that have been implemented have ensured strong progress in pupils' attainment.

Partnership working: Good

The school works very effectively with a range of partners.

There are strong links between the school and teachers, although the school's handbook does not meet statutory requirements in full.

A beneficial initiative recently involved providing opportunities for parents to become part of their children's education by working with them in the classroom. This had a positive effect on pupils' reading skills and confidence. Parents are very supportive of school life and contribute effectively through the activities of the Parent-Teacher Association.

The school has good links with the community. Pupils benefit greatly from visits away from the school site as well as from welcoming visitors to the school to speak about their work.

Successful arrangements exist between the school, the schools in the cluster and the local secondary school. Although pupils will not begin at the secondary school for another two years, regular activities are arranged between pupils at the school and Ysgol Plasmawr in order to promote effective transition. Teachers in both sectors arrange joint training sessions in order to share knowledge and good practice. Teachers also benefit greatly from this partnership.

The school works extensively with officers from the local authority to raise standards in literacy and attendance. A very strong partnership has been established between the school and voluntary agencies in order to promote pupils' wellbeing and self-respect.

Resource management: Good

The school has an appropriate level of staff to teach the curriculum. Training is linked clearly to the school's priorities and the school development plan. The school uses classroom assistants effectively in order to support learning and to give good support to cohorts of pupils in several areas.

Planning, preparation and assessment time is used effectively to track and monitor pupils' progress.

The headteacher and the governors manage the school's finances, site and resources effectively and review expenditure regularly alongside the authority's finance officer. The headteacher has planned ahead carefully for the future, making good use of planning for improvement procedures.

The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Because of the small number of pupils in the cohorts during the two years, it is not possible to make a meaningful analysis of trends.

In general, the results over that period for the expected level (level 2 or higher) is near to, or lower than the average for the family of schools, and consistently lower than the national average. When comparing the school's performance with that of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school was among the bottom 50% in 2010 and among the bottom 25% in 2011.

The results for pupils reaching the higher levels (level 3 or higher) in every core subject are higher than the averages for the family and Wales, and place the school among the top 25% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to pupil questionnaires

Seventeen responses were received, that is all the pupils in key stage 2. In general, the responses are very positive, and more positive than the average across primary schools in the whole of Wales.

All pupils believe that they are doing well at school, and that other pupils' behaviour did not hinder their work, and most say that they have enough equipment and resources to do their work. Many pupils think that homework helps them to build on class work and believe that, on the whole, pupils behave well at play time and lunchtime.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Responses were received from 19 parents, and almost every one was positive, giving a similar profile to the national picture.

Nearly all are satisfied with the school in general and believe that it is run well. All parents believe that children's behaviour and the school's processes for supporting pupils are good.

Some parents feel that the school does not encourage their children to live and eat healthily. Some are also of the opinion that they do not feel comfortable in approaching the school to make a suggestion or to complain, nor understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Anwen Griffith	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Judith Owen	Peer Inspector
Dylan Hughes	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.