



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

**Betws CP School
Betws Road
Ammanford
SA18 2HE**

Date of inspection: July 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

Ysgol Gynradd Betws is situated in the village of Betws on the outskirts of south-west Ammanford in Carmarthenshire. There are 77 pupils on roll from reception age to Year 6; most of them come from the local area and a small percentage come from Ammanford and the surrounding rural area.

The school has been designated a 'transitional school' by the local authority. This means that the main medium of teaching in the Foundation Phase is Welsh, while, in key stage 2, teaching is through the medium of Welsh and English.

The area is described as underprivileged and socially deprived. Forty-three per cent of pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals. This is much higher than the average for the local authority and for Wales. English is the home language of over 97% of pupils. Nearly all pupils come from a White British ethnic background.

Forty-nine per cent of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs, which is much higher than the national average. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2004.

The school was last inspected in 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Betws in 2012-2013 is £4,002. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £25,997 and the minimum is £2,878. Ysgol Gynradd Betws is in 35th position out of the 108 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- the quality of teaching is generally good;
- pupils have positive attitudes towards work, and work productively in lessons;
- nearly all pupils behave well and are courteous;
- most pupils communicate confidently in Welsh from an early age;
- the school is a happy, caring community; and
- provision for care, support and guidance is of high quality, and there are effective arrangements for providing additional support for individuals and groups.

However:

- in general, the school's performance over recent years does not compare favourably with the performance of similar schools, particularly in Welsh;
- pupils do not make enough progress in their ability to write at length in Welsh, and they do not use their writing skills in Welsh and English enough in other subjects;
- lack of planning to ensure progression in skills hinders the progress that pupils make in their work across the curriculum; and
- there is too much inconsistency in the way in which teachers use assessment to help pupils to improve the quality of their work.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the clear vision of school leaders is shared effectively with all staff;
- the school's self-evaluation report identifies areas for improvement and appropriate improvement priorities have been set;
- there is effective co-operation between all the school's staff;
- successful networks of professional practice have a positive effect on pupils' standards of attainment and wellbeing; and
- expenditure management procedures are effective and lead to raising standards.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards in Welsh throughout the school
- R2 Prepare specific plans to ensure development and continuity in skills across the curriculum
- R3 Ensure consistency in the use of assessment for learning across the school
- R4 Strengthen the development plan by including a clear action plan and quantitative targets to measure progress

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

Although results of pupils' basic assessments on entry to the school are generally low, nearly all pupils make appropriate general progress during their time at the school in many aspects of their work. Nearly all pupils are diligent during sessions, and show an interest in activities. They listen appropriately in class to their teachers and to each other. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress against targets that are set for them.

Pupils' oral skills are good throughout the school. They can converse naturally with their peers or with adults and can discuss their work intelligently, using polished language.

Most pupils make consistent progress in their reading skills. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils read accurately with appropriate expression. In key stage 2, many pupils read fluently and meaningfully in Welsh and English. They are able to discuss various authors and the main characters in the story. They are able to talk with good understanding about the main events in the stories that they have read. Their skills in gleaning information from reference books are developing successfully throughout the school.

Most pupils have good skills in numeracy and literacy, although these skills are not applied consistently across all subjects. Nearly all the school's older pupils write well in English. However, pupils are not making enough progress in developing their extended writing skills in Welsh, and they do not make enough use of their writing skills in both languages in other subjects across the school.

Pupils recall previous learning and apply it effectively to new situations. Pupils' thinking skills are developing appropriately throughout the school, for example when discussing emotions in the 'thinking detectives' assistance and support sessions.

Because of factors such as small numbers and the percentage of pupils who have additional learning needs, teachers' assessment results at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 must be treated with care.

Results at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012 at the expected outcome in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh, mathematical development and personal and social development, were significantly lower than expectations in comparison with the family of similar schools and all-Wales averages. At the higher outcome, the school's performance was also lower than all comparators.

In comparison with similar schools across Wales in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the percentage of pupils who achieve the Foundation Phase indicator places the school in the top 50%. The school is in the lower 50% in terms of performance in Welsh and in the bottom 25% in terms of mathematical development and personal and social development. There is no obvious difference between the performance of boys and girls.

In key stage 2, the results of 11-year-old pupils over four years have been uneven. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in English has been higher than the averages for the family in two of the last four years. Level 4 results in Welsh have been significantly lower than all comparators over time, although there is a pattern of progress. However, the standards of pupils' current work in Welsh are higher than results at the end of key stage 2. Results in writing in both languages have been low over a period of four years. Results in reading in Welsh have also been significantly lower than the averages for the family over time.

Results for mathematics show a pattern of progress over a period of three years and have been higher than the average for the family in the last two years. Results for science have been declining over time but they rose higher than the average for the family last year.

In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage that are entitled to free school meals, in general, results over time have placed the school among the bottom 25% of schools in Welsh, the lower 50% in English and the core subject indicator, and the top 50% in science and mathematics.

The percentage of pupils who achieve the higher level is generally lower than all comparators in both languages and science. Obvious progress can be seen in the last three years in mathematics. In 2012, pupils' level 5 results in mathematics were higher than all comparators.

There is no obvious pattern between the results of boys and girls over a period of four years, or between pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils feel safe at school and know to whom to turn if something is worrying them. Nearly all pupils are courteous and they show respect, care and concern towards each other and towards adults. Pupils show a clear understanding of what needs to be done to be healthy.

The school's attendance levels are uneven, but they have placed the school in the top 25% in comparison with similar schools for two of the last four years.

In lessons, nearly all pupils persevere with their learning tasks and respond purposefully to adults. Nearly all pupils take responsibility for their actions.

Members of the school council and the eco committee take an active part by making decisions about aspects of school life. They enjoy their responsibility, such as monitoring the school's use of energy. They are diligent and have a positive effect on aspects such as environmental activities and resources.

Pupils' self-confidence and their feeling of belonging to the local community are fostered effectively through activities such as performing for the elderly and collecting litter around the village.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school plans appropriate and relevant learning experiences that gain pupils' interest across the school. Teachers co-operate effectively to plan detailed work programmes.

The school makes appropriate use of National Curriculum subject orders in order to ensure provision that meets subject requirements in a balanced way. A number of appropriate opportunities to use their oral skills are provided. However, there are no purposeful plans in place to ensure that literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills develop appropriately across the curriculum.

The school provides a variety of good experiences that promote the Welsh dimension through visits from theatre companies, local studies and studies of the work of Welsh artists such as Cefyn Burgess.

Pupils' understanding of living sustainably and its importance is promoted successfully through links with an overseas school and learning about fair trade. The school offers useful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of global citizenship through their curricular activities, their links with a school in Kenya and through learning sessions with a teacher who has taught, for a short period, in Lesotho.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching in all classes is consistently good. Teachers have thorough and up-to-date subject knowledge. They plan a progression of exciting activities that stimulate pupils' interest. However, there is not enough of a challenge at times to extend the most able pupils.

Teachers make good use of assistants to give additional support to specific groups and individuals. Support staff contribute effectively to the quality of experiences that pupils have. Teachers and support staff have a good working relationship with pupils.

Assessment for learning strategies are developing appropriately, but this is not consistent across the school. Pupils' work is marked regularly but only in a few cases do constructive comments refer to how to improve work.

The process of tracking pupils' progress throughout the school has been established firmly and the school uses information effectively to identify pupils' specific needs and to monitor their development.

Annual reports to parents give a clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress and the next stages in their learning. Pupils and parents have appropriate opportunities to respond to annual reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Ysgol Betws is a safe, orderly and caring community, in which everyone is appreciated. Appropriate policies and arrangements promote healthy living and

wellbeing successfully. In the classroom and on an extra-curricular basis, pupils have an opportunity to take part in activities that enable them to live healthily.

There is comprehensive provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship sessions provide appropriately for pupils' spiritual development.

The school places a strong emphasis on inclusion and ensuring pupils' wellbeing. Pupils understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and the school has strategies in order to promote this. There are clear strategies for promoting behaviour. Provision for developing pupils' social and emotional skills is a strength at the school.

The school has thorough procedures for identifying individual pupils' additional learning needs. The school uses data well to identify pupils who need additional support. Provision for meeting the needs of specific groups of learners is successful and is a strength at the school. There are comprehensive individual education plans for them and effective intervention systems to ensure that pupils make progress in line with their targets. Progress is reviewed regularly. Effective use is made of external agencies, specialist services and social and welfare services in order to support pupils. Arrangements meet statutory requirements in full.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school is a close and welcoming community. The supportive ethos promotes a feeling of belonging effectively.

Pupils are encouraged to show respect, care and concern towards each other and others, and they have a good relationship with their peers and all members of staff. The school considers pupils' various backgrounds effectively.

Respect for diversity and racial equality is promoted successfully through personal and social education programmes and through promoting personal and social values successfully.

There are enough resources that match pupils' needs appropriately, and teachers make good use of them. The learning environment in all classrooms is colourful and stimulating, and celebrates pupils' efforts successfully. The school building and grounds are used effectively and are maintained well.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for raising standards and ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. She has conveyed her vision successfully to staff and governors. In weekly staff meetings, there is a clear and appropriate focus on core school issues such as improving standards and provision for pupils. Leaders create a school ethos in which pupils and staff feel that they are being appreciated.

Leaders' monitoring role is developing appropriately and is beginning to have a positive effect on school work. A beneficial example of the effect of monitoring work is the improvements in classrooms across the school. Co-ordinators have prepared profiles that include examples of pupils' work, which are of assistance to them in monitoring standards of attainment throughout the school.

The governing body receives comprehensive reports regularly from the headteacher. It is aware of strengths and areas to be developed in the school. The role of the governing body as a critical friend is developing appropriately. Governors are very supportive and undertake their work conscientiously.

The school pays appropriate attention to national priorities such as raising standards of literacy and numeracy. Assessment for learning strategies are developing appropriately throughout the school. Leaders pay appropriate attention to developing pupils' thinking skills. Increasing development can be seen in pupils' ability to use previous knowledge to solve problems.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's self-evaluation report is comprehensive and reflects the majority of strengths and areas to be developed. Teachers and governors are well informed about the school's strengths and areas to be developed. However, the self-evaluation process does not give enough consideration to the views of pupils, all members of staff or parents.

The school's monitoring arrangements are developing gradually and are beginning to contribute to the self-evaluation process. The headteacher is mainly responsible for monitoring all of the school's work and the co-ordinators' role in monitoring the quality of teaching and scrutinising pupils' work has not been developed in full. However, the few recent monitoring reports demonstrate the school's strengths accurately and identify the steps for improvement clearly.

The school uses information from self-evaluation to set appropriate priorities for improvement. Priorities are supported by allocating funds and human resources appropriately. However, many of the activities and targets are not specific enough and, as a result, it is not always easy to measure progress.

There are successful networks of professional practice with other schools and partners, which have had a positive effect on the standards of attainment and wellbeing of almost all pupils. Two beneficial examples are the mathematics network and the 'assistance and support' network.

Although self-evaluation arrangements have not been developed in full to date, the quality of the self-evaluation document and the appropriate priorities for improvement that have been set are a firm basis for the school in raising standards further.

Partnership working: Good

There are close links between the school and the nursery group on the site. The extensive co-operation ensures that nearly all pupils settle happily to the school's reception class.

There is beneficial co-operation between the school and the secondary school. Arrangements contribute well towards ensuring that pupils settle in confidently in the secondary school. The 'Blue Sky' scheme, which exists between the schools in the cluster and the secondary school, responds successfully to the requirements of the school's able and talented pupils.

There is effective co-operation between the school and relevant agencies in order to ensure responses to any underachievement as a result of social disadvantage. Use is made of the expertise of an educational psychologist, social services and the behaviour support service as needed. These partnerships make an important contribution to ensuring the good standards of wellbeing and progress of specific pupils.

Joint standardising and moderating arrangements with local schools are effective and contribute beneficially to ensuring consistency in levelling pupils' work.

Resource management: Good

The school has enough specialist and experienced teaching staff and support staff to address all aspects of the school curriculum. Effective use is made of support staff to support intervention groups. These have a positive effect on the standards and wellbeing of specific individuals and groups of pupils.

The school's expenditure decisions link appropriately with priorities for improvement and pupils' wellbeing. Expenditure is monitored effectively by the headteacher and the governing body.

Teachers make appropriate use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment. The school has an appropriate performance management system, which provides opportunities for continuous professional development.

The school provides good value for money, considering the progress of most pupils.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Because of factors such as small numbers and the percentage of pupils who have additional learning needs, teachers' assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 must be treated with care.

In 2012, the percentage of seven year old pupils who achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5) in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh, mathematical development and personal and social development, was significantly lower than the averages for the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales. The percentage of pupils who achieved the highest outcome, namely 'Outcome 6', was also lower than every comparator.

In comparison with similar schools across Wales in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the percentage of pupils who achieve the Foundation Phase indicator, namely a combination of the results, places the school in the top 50% of schools. The school is in the lower 50% for performance in Welsh and in the bottom 25% for mathematical development and personal and social development.

In the 2012 assessments, there was no obvious difference between the performance of boys and girls.

In key stage 2, the results of 11-year-old children over four years have been uneven. The percentage of pupils who achieved the core subject indicator (level 4 in a combination of results in Welsh or English, mathematics and science) has been higher than the averages for the family of similar schools in two of the last four years.

The percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in English has also been higher than the averages for the family in two of the last four years. Level 4 results in Welsh have been significantly lower than all comparators over time, although there is a pattern of progress. Standards of writing in both languages have been low over time. Results for reading in Welsh have also been significantly lower than the averages for the family over time. Mathematics results show a pattern of progress over a period of three years and have been higher than the family average in the last two years, although results have been lower than the average for Wales over the same period. Results in science have been declining over time but rose above the family average last year.

In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils that are entitled to free school meals, these results place the school among the bottom 25% of schools in terms of Welsh, the lower 50% in terms of English and the core subject indicator, the higher 50% in terms of science and the top 25% in terms of mathematics.

The percentage of pupils who achieve higher levels, namely level 5, is generally lower than all comparators in both languages and science. Obvious progress can be

seen in the last three years in mathematics. Last year, pupils' level 5 results in mathematics were higher than all comparators.

There is no obvious pattern between the results for girls and boys over a period of four years, or between pupils who are entitled to free school meals and the remainder of the cohort.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Twenty-five responses were received from key stage 2 pupils and they all agree that:

- they feel safe at school;
- the school deals well with any bullying;
- they know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious;
- the school teaches them how to keep healthy;
- there are many opportunities at the school to take regular physical exercise;
- they are doing well at school;
- teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress;
- they know what to do and to whom to speak if they find the work difficult;
- homework helps them to understand and improve their school work;
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work; and
- children behave well at play times and lunch times.

The majority feel that other children behave well and that they can do their work.

Responses to parent/carer questionnaires

Twenty-five responses to the questionnaire were received from parents and all agreed, or strongly agreed that:

- they are satisfied with the school in general;
- their children like school;
- their children received support to settle in well;
- their children are making good progress at school;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect children to work hard and to do their best;
- their children are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise;
- their children are safe at school;
- they receive regular information about their children's progress;
- the school helps children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility;
and
- their children have been prepared well for moving on to the next school.

Nearly all agreed or agreed strongly that:

- pupils behave well at school;
- homework that is given builds well upon what is learnt at school;
- the school treats all pupils fairly and with respect;
- children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs;
- they feel comfortable in asking a question at school, making suggestions or identifying a problem;
- they understand the school's system for dealing with complaints;
- there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits; and
- the school is well-run.

The percentages of positive responses to the pupil and parent questionnaires compares favourably with the averages for primary schools in Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Michael Hayes	Reporting Inspector
Rhian Jones	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Helen Griffiths	Peer Inspector
Catrin James	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.