



A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon
Gwyddon Road
Abercarn
Newport
NP11 5GX**

Date of inspection: February 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 Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon is under the care of Caerphilly local authority and serves a large area including the villages of Newbridge, Abercarn, Cwmcarn, Risca and Hafodyrynys. The school has 242 pupils between the ages of three and 11 years old, including 26 nursery age children and 15 pre-nursery age children. Pupils start at the school at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. The school's attainment results show that a majority of pupils are of a moderate ability on entry.

More than 18% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the local authority and Wales averages.

Ninety-eight per cent of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and approximately 6% come from Welsh-speaking homes.

Approximately 12% of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register; however, none has a statement of special educational needs.

There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection in January 2007, including the headteacher who was appointed in September 2011 and the deputy headteacher who was appointed two months later.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon in 2012-2013 is £2,791. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Caerphilly is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon is 61st out of the 75 primary schools in Caerphilly 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:

- there is a very friendly and inclusive ethos;
- almost all pupils make firm progress in their learning;
- the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 compares well with the average of similar schools and the all-Wales average;
- pupils' behaviour is very good;
- almost all pupils are enthusiastic and participate well in lessons;
- the quality of teaching is robust; and
- there are clear systems for assessing progress.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team share a clear vision;
- the governing body undertakes its roles very effectively;
- it addresses a number of national and local priorities which have a positive impact on learning outcomes;
- leaders identify its strengths and areas for development clearly; and
- the school has fostered a wide variety of useful partnerships which contribute well towards improving the quality of provision.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that planning for developing skills builds appropriately on pupils' current knowledge and understanding and promotes continuity and progression in their learning

R2 Share best teaching practice across all classes

R3 Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to improve their own work

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, almost all pupils make firm progress in their learning.

Most pupils use Welsh fluently and effectively on all kinds of occasions. In the Foundation Phase, pupils make firm progress in their literacy and communication skills in Welsh. The majority are able to read their own reading and work books to a standard that is appropriate to their age and ability. They are able to write independently for different purposes, using appropriate punctuation.

Most pupils in key stage 2 are able to talk confidently about their work. The majority are able to express their opinions maturely about different issues that interest them. The majority of pupils read suitable materials aloud fairly meaningfully in Welsh and English. Most can write extensively for a range of purposes in both languages. Most pupils punctuate correctly and present their work coherently and tidily.

Pupils with additional learning needs and more able pupils make good progress.

In 2012, 88% of pupils in the Foundation Phase achieved the expected level in relation to their development in language, mathematics and personal skills (the Foundation Phase indicator). This is higher than the average of the family of similar schools and the Wales average. The proportion of pupils who achieve higher than the expected level is also higher than the family and Wales averages.

When comparing the school's results with those of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performs among the top 25% for language skills, the top 50% for mathematical skills and the lower 50% for personal skills.

In key stage 2, 96% of pupils achieve the expected level or above in Welsh and English, mathematics and science combined (the core subject indicator) in 2012. This is significantly higher than the average of the family of similar schools and the Wales average. In general, there has been an upward trend over the past four years. The percentage of pupils who achieve higher than the expected level is higher than the family average in both languages, similar in mathematics, but lower in science. The school performs below the Wales average in Welsh, mathematics and science and above the Wales average in English.

When comparing the school's results for the percentage who achieve the expected level with that of similar schools in terms of the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performs in the top 25% in English, mathematics and science and in the top 50% in Welsh.

Over a four-year period, there is no obvious pattern of difference between the performance of boys and girls, nor when comparing pupils who are entitled to free school meals with those who are not.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and at other times during the day. Almost all pupils participate conscientiously in lessons and are enthusiastic about learning.

Almost all pupils feel safe at school and know with whom they can talk for advice or to discuss any concerns that they might have. The vast majority are aware of the importance of keeping healthy and take part in regular exercise activities provided by the school. Many take advantage of opportunities to take part in a variety of after-school clubs which contribute well towards their wellbeing and increase their confidence.

Pupils' attendance percentage is around 94% and shows an upward trend. This is higher than the average of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Pupils' punctuality is good.

Older pupils respond positively to the responsibilities provided for them by staff, for example looking after the younger children and ensuring order on the corridors. They take responsibility for their work maturely and treat others with respect and care. Pupils are very proud of their school and take advantage of suitable opportunities to express their views by contributing to the activities of the school council and the eco council. They contribute extensively to the school's charity work by raising money and taking part in social events in the community. This develops their social and life skills effectively.

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

The school provides an excellent range of learning experiences. In the Foundation Phase, the wide range of learning experiences that are provided are interesting and stimulating and enable pupils to make good progress towards meeting the required learning outcomes. The outdoor area is used extensively by Foundation Phase staff to provide rich learning experiences for pupils. In key stage 2, interesting learning experiences deal appropriately with National Curriculum requirements and engage most pupils.

Teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their key skills across the curriculum. However, opportunities to develop skills do not always build appropriately upon pupils' current knowledge and understanding to ensure progression and continuity in their learning.

Intervention programmes aimed at pupils with poor literacy and numeracy skills enable individuals to acquire the skills needed to access the wider curriculum. Staff provide appropriately to challenge more able and talented pupils.

The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is at the heart of the school's work programme and provision for developing the Welsh language is promoted very effectively. The wide range of extra-curricular activities that are provided helps pupils to develop a number of key personal and social skills well.

Through promoting schemes and an initiative such as being an eco-school successfully, the school develops pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship well.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is robust throughout the school. Resources are used effectively to support learning. Where teaching is at its best, bold enquiry and probing questioning extend pupils' understanding. In many lessons, teachers have a robust understanding of the curriculum; they explain new concepts well, ensure that sessions are of a good pace and stimulate pupils effectively. However, in some sessions, teachers do not challenge pupils enough and discipline is not always firm enough.

Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of lessons' learning goals. They set success criteria and use praise effectively to encourage less confident pupils. Pupils benefit from the fact that their teachers discuss the quality of their work in a sensitive and constructive manner. Pupils' written work is marked regularly and constructive comments are given on the majority of efforts. However, there are a very few examples of pupils being challenged to improve their own work after receiving comments from teachers.

The school has clear systems for assessing progress and tracking pupils using standardised tests. Teachers understand their pupils' needs well and, overall, differentiate appropriately in order for them to move on to the next stage in their learning.

Reports to parents are clear and informative. Parents and carers feel that they are very well informed about their children's progress, and they appreciate the opportunity to respond to the report.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes and supports pupils' health and wellbeing well. The school is a very happy one in which pupils' feel safe. Pupils' health and fitness is promoted well by various sports clubs and a daily fruit shop. The school is an important part of the community and provides good opportunities for pupils to support local cultural and social events.

Good use is made of the support of external specialist services, including the education welfare service, medical services and emergency services, and pupils benefit from these experiences.

Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily. Through physical activities during the day and in after-school clubs, they are given a wide variety of opportunities to increase their health and fitness levels.

Staff promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well by planning a wide range of experiences. Useful information about school life is available to pupils and parents. This includes the school prospectus and website, regular newsletters and the governors' annual report.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern. The school promotes good attendance consistently.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is comprehensive. Pupils' needs are identified early by teachers and they have good quality individual education plans. These plans are reviewed frequently in consultation with pupils, parents and the appropriate specialist agencies. Provision for more able and talented pupils is developing well.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a very friendly and inclusive ethos. There is a close-knit and welcoming community and a warm atmosphere between staff and pupils. Everybody is eager to help and support each other, giving an equal opportunity to all. Pupils are encouraged to understand and respect others from various backgrounds and they are prepared well for the next stages in their education.

Policies, plans and procedures are in place to ensure equal opportunities for all and to promote equality and social diversity. All stakeholders are aware of these.

Purposeful use is made of the school's accommodation and grounds for play and learning, following the recommendations of the school council and eco council. Classrooms are colourful and have sufficient resources for the purposes of the curriculum. Polished displays of a high standard can be seen throughout the school, which stimulate learning. They show good examples of pupils' work. The building and grounds are clean and well maintained.

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

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team share a clear vision for the school and they convey that vision to pupils, staff, governors and parents very successfully. In a relatively short space of time, the headteacher has succeeded in identifying the school's main strengths and areas for development well and has implemented improvements effectively. All members of staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities very conscientiously. Staff, departmental and senior management team meetings ensure appropriate opportunities to discuss key issues regularly, focusing on standards and progress against strategic priorities.

The governing body undertakes its role very responsibly. Governors know the school well and they have a firm understanding of how the school performs. The school council accompany them around the school regularly and they observe classroom lessons in order to better understand what is happening. They operate very effectively as critical friends and challenge the school well. This is a strong feature of the school's life.

The school has addressed a number of national and local priorities and this has had a positive impact on learning outcomes. The Foundation Phase has been established successfully and staff have developed a number of very effective

professional learning communities, which have had a positive impact on pupils' standards. Leaders recognise the importance of the learner's voice and ensure appropriate opportunities for this to occur in all aspects of school life.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation report is of good quality. It identifies clearly what the school is doing well and areas for further development. The self-evaluation process is at the heart of the school's daily life and considers the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils effectively. It also considers the outcomes of classroom observations, discussions with pupils and scrutinising their work.

Outcomes of the self-evaluation process influence directly the priorities in the school development plan. The school development plan is a useful document which outlines actions, success outcomes and the effect on standards clearly. The development plan's priorities over the past two years have had a positive impact on standards in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2.

An effective professional learning community exists within the school, which enables staff to share and develop their knowledge for pupils' benefit. The school also works closely and shares good practice with a number of other schools within the cluster regularly. This is a strong feature.

Partnership working: Good

The school has fostered a wide variety of useful partnerships, which contribute well towards improving the quality of provision for pupils.

The school has strong links with parents and carers. The school benefits financially and socially from the support of the active 'Friends of Cwm Gwyddon' association. There are effective partnerships with the community and this has a positive impact on pupils' awareness of their local area.

Good links with the Cylch Meithrin which is on-site ease the admission arrangements for new pupils.

The school works very successfully with the cluster of primary schools and the secondary school it feeds into in order to create teaching materials and share resources. These partnerships have a positive impact on provision and on standards, particularly on standards of pupils' oral, reading and writing skills. The school works effectively with the local secondary school to prepare older pupils for the next step in their education. One very effective example of this is the way in which a transition teacher works in partnership with the secondary school and three primary schools, including Cwm Gwyddon. In partnership with other teachers from the cluster, teachers moderate and standardise assessments effectively at the end of key stage 2 and bring rigour to the process.

The school accepts trainee teachers from the higher education sector for periods of work experience, which assist in sharing good practice and developing staff professionally.

Resource management: Good

Leaders and managers manage the resources allocated to the school effectively, and ensure appropriate staffing arrangements to teach the curriculum. Teachers and learning assistants have a good level of knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum effectively. There are suitable arrangements for evaluating and managing the performance of all staff, which ensures appropriate opportunities for individuals to develop professionally and achieve the school's agreed aims. Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time. This time is managed well.

The best possible use is made of the resources available both inside and outside the building to enrich the curriculum. Staff and pupils have worked together very effectively to create a stimulating and attractive learning environment.

Decisions about school expenditure are linked with priorities for improving pupils' standards and wellbeing. The school's budget is managed well and gives relevant consideration to financial reports regularly. Effective use is made of substantial amounts received through grants and projects, such as the project to improve the garden.

Considering pupils' standards, the ethos and care, the quality of teaching and the robust links with partners, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon is in 10th position in terms of challenge in the family of similar schools.

In 2012, 88% of pupils in the Foundation Phase achieved the expected level in relation to their development in language, mathematics and personal skills (the Foundation Phase indicator). This is higher than the average of the family of similar schools, where 79% achieved the core subject indicator, and the Wales average of 80%. The proportion of pupils who achieve higher than the expected level was also higher than the family and Wales averages.

When comparing the school's results with those of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performs in the top 25% for language skills, the top 50% for mathematics skills and among the lower 50% for personal skills.

In key stage 2, 96% of pupils achieved the expected level or above in Welsh and English, mathematics and science combined (the core subject indicator) in 2012. This is significantly higher than the average of the family of similar schools, where 82% achieved the core subject indicator, and the Wales average of 83%. In general, there has been an upward trend over the past four years. The percentage of pupils who achieve higher than the expected level is higher than the family average in both languages, is similar in mathematics, but lower in science. The school performs below the Wales average in Welsh, mathematics and science and above the Wales average in English.

When comparing the school's results for the percentage who achieve the expected level with those of similar schools in terms of the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performs in the top 25% in English, mathematics and science and in the top 50% in Welsh.

Over a four-year period, there is no obvious pattern of difference between the performance of boys and girls, nor when comparing pupils who are entitled to free school meals with those who are not.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred responses were received from pupils.

All are of the opinion that:

- teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress;

Almost all are of the opinion that:

- they know with whom to talk if they are worried or anxious;
- the school teaches them how to keep healthy; and
- they know what to do and who to ask if they find their work difficult.

Most are of the opinion that:

- they feel safe in school;
- the school deals well with any bullying;
- there are many opportunities at school for them to undertake physical exercise;
- they are doing well at school;
- their homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school;
- there are enough books, equipment, and computers for them to do their work;
and
- nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time.

Many are of the opinion that:

- other children behave well and that they can do their work.

The responses of pupils at Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon compare favourably with average pupil responses across Wales in all statements.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Of the 24 responses received from parents:

All were of the opinion that:

- their child likes the school;
- their child is making good progress at school;
- pupils behave well in school;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect their child to work hard and do their best;
- the homework that is given builds well on what their children learn at school;

- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- their child feels safe at school;
- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs;
- the school helps their child to become more mature and shoulder responsibility;
- their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school; and
- the school is well run.

Most are of the opinion that:

- overall, they are satisfied with the school;
- their child was helped to settle in well when they started at the school;
- they receive regular information about their child's progress;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or identify a problem; and
- they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Many are of the opinion that:

- there is a good range of activities available, including trips or visits.

Parents' responses for Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon compare favourably with the average parent responses across Wales in all statements except one, namely that there is a good range of activities available, including trips or visits.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Huw Watkins	Reporting Inspector
Meinir Howells	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Eifion Watkins	Peer Inspector
Anita Tucknutt	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.