



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 Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen
Clinic Road
Ynyswen
Treorchy
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF42 6ED**

Date of inspection: June 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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2013: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 13/08/2013

Context

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen is a designated bilingual school. It serves the town of Treorchy and other communities at the upper end of the Rhondda Valley. There are 273 full-time pupils at the school, including 40 nursery aged children. Official data shows that 48% of pupils speak Welsh at home; however, the school noted that 23% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Currently, the school has very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Twenty-three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is slightly higher than the national percentage. Thirty-six per cent of pupils receive support for additional learning needs. No permanent or temporary exclusions were recorded during the year prior to the inspection.

The headteacher was appointed a week prior to the inspection. However, she had been leading the school as the acting headteacher since September 2011.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen in 2012-2013 is £3,013. The maximum school budget per pupil in primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £6,197 and the minimum is £2,561. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen is in 90th place out of the 113 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- many pupils across the school make suitable progress during their time at school;
- most pupils' ability to use spoken Welsh in a large number of contexts is a strong feature across the school; and
- the school provides a range of stimulating learning experiences across the curriculum in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2, which respond appropriately to the needs of most pupils.

However:

- standards across the school vary excessively, with the school's performance, for the most part, comparing unfavourably with the performance of similar schools over recent years;
- the most able pupils do not achieve their full potential; and
- attendance has placed the school among the lower 50% in comparison with similar schools in four of the last five years.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision and a sound understanding of what needs to be done in order to improve standards;
- governors develop their role effectively as critical friends; and
- comprehensive self-evaluation procedures have been established, and planning for improvement is detailed.

However:

- recent arrangements have not had enough of an effect on the work achieved by pupils; and
- the senior management team have not developed their role as strategic leaders in full.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of extended writing, particularly in key stage 2
- R2 Improve pupils' attendance levels in order to compare more favourably with attendance in similar schools
- R3 Ensure detailed planning for progression in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and across learning areas and curriculum subjects
- R4 Raise the level of challenge for the most able pupils across the school
- R5 Strengthen assessment processes and disseminate the use of assessment for learning
- R6 Empower the role of the senior management team as strategic leaders

What happens next?

The school will draw up 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

Many pupils across the school make suitable progress during their time at the school. In general, they achieve work of an appropriate standard in lessons and in books, but there is too much inconsistency in standards across the school.

Most pupils' ability to use oral Welsh in a large number of contexts is a strong feature across the school. By the end of the Foundation Phase, they become increasingly confident when discussing their work. Considering their linguistic background, their oral skills develop quickly. These develop further in key stage 2, with most pupils conversing confidently and maturely in both formal and informal situations. Most pupils apply their oracy skills effectively in their work across the curriculum.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils read their own books and work to a standard that is appropriate for their age and ability. Nearly all pupils read with expression and a good knowledge of the text. By the end of the phase, the majority write independently for different purposes, and use sound syntax and vocabulary that is related to the theme.

In key stage 2, many pupils make appropriate progress in Welsh and English. Nearly all pupils communicate successfully in English and discuss their ideas meaningfully. Most pupils read with an appropriate level of fluency in both languages. At the beginning of key stage 2, the majority of pupils build successfully on their writing skills. The majority write suitably in a range of different forms and with an appropriate level of accuracy. However, by the end of key stage 2, a few pupils do not vary their syntax frequently, and only a minority choose words for effect. Only a few pupils manage to write in a range of extended ways, giving full consideration to the reader's requirements. Many pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are untidy.

Most pupils' numeracy and ICT skills have not developed fully across the subjects.

Most pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress against their individual targets. However, pupils of a higher ability do not achieve their full potential.

In 2012, the school was among the lower 50% in comparison with similar schools in the Foundation Phase indicator and in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh, and in the bottom 25% in mathematical development. In personal development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, the school was among the top 50%.

In key stage 2, the school was in the bottom 25% in the core subject indicator and in English, mathematics and science, and in the top 50% in Welsh in 2012. In general, over the last three years, the school's performance has not compared favourably with

the performance of schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals.

At the higher outcome (outcome 6+), the school's performance in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh placed the school in the top 50% in comparison with similar schools, but among the lower 50% in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity and in the bottom 25% in mathematical development.

At the higher than expected levels (level 5+) at the end of key stage 2 in 2012, the school was in the lower 50% of similar schools in Welsh, and in the bottom 25% in mathematics, English and science. Achievements at the higher levels had placed the school in the top 25% or 50% during the previous two years, and in the lower 50% prior to that, except in Welsh. In general, girls perform significantly better than boys in Welsh and English at the expected level and the higher level at the end of key stage 2.

Wellbeing: Adequate

All pupils at the school feel safe and know that they can approach the headteacher, members of staff and friends for support, when needed. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and that regular exercise promotes this further by taking part in a number of after-school clubs.

Most pupils' behaviour across the school is good. They respect the school's rules on discipline and respect their peers.

The school's attendance has placed it among the bottom 50% in comparison with similar schools in four of the last five years. Over the last three years, unauthorised absences have been higher than the national percentage.

All pupils are very proud of their school and play an active role in the community. Members of the school council and eco-council have a prominent say in the school's life and work and make decisions that contribute effectively towards aspects of sustainability.

There are few examples of pupils using their skills to improve their own work. Pupils' ability to work independently across the school is developing gradually.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school provides a range of stimulating learning experiences across the curriculum in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, which respond appropriately to the needs of most pupils. However, there is not enough detail or progression in planning. In addition, the lack of consistency and challenge across both key stages prevents more able pupils from achieving their potential. Provision for religious education has not been developed fully.

Plans give appropriate attention to developing communication skills; however, the opportunities available for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects have not been developed fully. Although plans identify opportunities to develop numeracy and ICT skills, provision for these skills in pupils' books is inconsistent.

All staff promote the use of Welsh successfully. Provision for developing pupils' awareness of the local area and aspects of Welsh history is also effective. The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to perform, compete and participate in extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum.

Provision for sustainable development is suitable and is beginning to have an influence on pupils' practices. The eco-committee helps to ensure that the school operates sustainably. Pupils have some awareness and understanding of global citizenship; however, provision has not been developed fully. They are proud to be able to say that they are keen to help others from less fortunate backgrounds than themselves.

Teaching: Adequate

Adults are good language models who contribute significantly towards standards of spoken language. In most lessons, there is a good working relationship between adults and pupils. Teaching assistants contribute effectively towards supporting pupils' learning.

In the majority of lessons, teachers plan carefully and differentiate successfully. The lesson's aim is clear and ensures pupils' understanding of the requirements of the task. However, in a minority of lessons where teachers do not plan in enough detail to challenge more able pupils, expectations are not high enough and pupils are not given enough opportunities to become independent learners.

All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and comments celebrate effort appropriately. Where marking is most effective, comments refer directly to success criteria and ensure that pupils understand the next steps that they need to make in order to make progress. However, this is not consistent across the curriculum, nor across the school.

Work to develop assessment for learning strategies has begun; however, the process is not embedded consistently across the school. There are few opportunities for pupils to discuss their success criteria during lessons and, as a result, only a few are aware of their personal targets. Recently, the school has introduced appropriate data gathering procedures to track pupils' progress. Data is used appropriately to plan suitable intervention strategies. Teachers' assessments are not consistently accurate across the school. The standard of annual reports to parents is good.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes and supports pupils' health and wellbeing effectively. Effective arrangements exist to promote the advantages of healthy living and to develop

pupils' fitness. This is reinforced successfully by extra-curricular activities arranged by the school.

Provision for personal and social education is good. Pupils' moral development is promoted effectively; however, provision for their spiritual development is not as sound. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school and the wider community and this contributes towards their personal development. They are glad of the opportunity to help each other and others to improve the school. The school provides valuable individual support on issues relating to education and wellbeing, including professional support, as required. This ensures effective support for these pupils.

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

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs meet pupils' requirements. Their needs are identified early and useful support programmes are chosen for these pupils. Good use is made of specialist external agencies, as required. Intervention programmes have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes. Procedures for reporting on these pupils' progress are effective.

Learning environment: Adequate

Ysgol Ynyswen offers a happy and homely environment to its pupils. It is a caring school where everyone is respected and supported. There is an inclusive environment and feeling, which fosters responsible individuals who are willing to help each other and others. This ethos is based on implementing policies and procedures that respect the rights of all individuals in the school. The school ensures that it offers the same opportunities and experiences to all pupils, whatever their social background and ability.

On the whole, there is an appropriate supply of resources for lessons and activities across the curriculum. However, the lack of ICT resources prevents the development of most pupils' skills. The accommodation offers a suitable learning environment and outdoor areas are beginning to add to the learning opportunities available in the classroom. The school yard is suitable; however, there are few resources to enrich pupils' leisure time.

There are displays of pupils' work and successes across the school and this contributes towards creating an attractive environment and hides the less appealing condition of some walls. The whole site is accessible to disabled pupils. The school's buildings and grounds are maintained appropriately.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
--

Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

The new headteacher's leadership is beginning to have a positive effect on the school's strategic development. She has a clear vision and has conveyed that vision successfully to governors, staff and pupils.

A number of appropriate procedures have been implemented recently to ensure robust processes for raising standards and ensuring progress throughout the school. These new procedures focus on improving the quality of teaching and using data to raise standards. However, these processes are not established enough to have a positive effect of the standard of work in pupils' books. The senior management team are still developing their role as strategic leaders. Although they support the headteacher's work, they do not play a full and active part in the self-evaluation process and planning for improvement. Subject leaders have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in their particular areas; however, they do not have enough of an influence on raising standards across the school.

The principles of the Foundation Phase are in place; however, they are not implemented fully in a consistent manner. Opportunities to develop pupils as independent learners have not been established in full.

Governors are very supportive and fulfil their duties conscientiously. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They share the headteacher's vision and operate effectively as critical friends. They are part of the self-evaluation process and of setting priorities for the school improvement plan.

The school pays appropriate attention to national priorities, such as raising pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy. Recently, the school has improved planning in the Foundation Phase, and has introduced some assessment for learning strategies and the skills framework. However, these are not embedded fully in the school's work.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation document identifies clearly the majority of areas for development in the school. The school's new self-evaluation procedure is comprehensive and includes the voice of pupils, parents, staff and governors. Findings of monitoring and data analysis are used effectively to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. Although there is a procedure in place for scrutinising books, this has not led to enough of an improvement in the standards of pupils' work.

The school improvement plan is an operational document which identifies appropriate priorities. There is a close link between the priorities in the improvement plan and the findings of the self-evaluation process. The plan includes measurable

targets and specific funding linked to priorities. Staff and governors monitor progress towards targets regularly.

Networks of professional practice with other schools are developing appropriately. The school has worked on literacy projects in partnership with schools in the cluster and schools in the family; however, the effect is not seen consistently in pupils' work. The principle of disseminating best practice across the school has not been developed fully.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a number of effective partnerships. A strong partnership exists with parents. The parent teacher association is very active and raises money regularly to buy valuable resources that enrich learning. A number of parents' evenings are held to share information and to give them guidance and support on aspects of literacy and numeracy. This partnership helps parents to play a more active role in their children's education. Good use of interactive technology, letters and a timetable of events are an effective way of sharing information and celebrating pupils' work.

There are strong links with the local community, which enrich pupils' learning experiences further. There is a close partnership between the school and local businesses. There are effective links with Carmel Chapel, and the local minister visits the school regularly to develop pupils' moral and spiritual attitudes.

There are effective partnerships with a number of local authority agencies, which have a positive effect on developing pupils' wellbeing. The school works successfully with Tai Education Centre, which deals with elements of anti-social behaviour. This partnership has had a positive effect on the behaviour of individual pupils at the school.

Effective transition arrangements exist with local nurseries and secondary schools, which facilitates transition arrangements and prepares pupils at the school for the next step in their education. Although staff have worked with the secondary school and other schools to standardise and moderate work, this has not yet ensured consistency in terms of accurate teachers' assessments. The school works closely with other schools in the catchment area to share good practice and hold joint training, and on projects to raise standards in physical education and literacy.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has enough staff to teach the curriculum appropriately. Teachers are supported successfully by classroom assistants, who give good support to individuals and groups of pupils in lessons and in intervention sessions.

The school meets national requirements by ensuring teachers' arrangements for planning, preparation and assessment, which are used appropriately.

Suitable arrangements are in place to manage the performance of all staff at the school. Training opportunities are provided for professional development in line with the school's priorities and managing the performance of individual members of staff.

The school has an appropriate range of resources, which are used appropriately to promote and enrich learning.

The school has been in financial debt for eight years up to the last financial year; however, by working with the authority and making effective savings, the debt has now been eliminated. Recently, the governing body has been monitoring the school budget more effectively in order to ensure an appropriate supply of resources to respond to the school's needs.

Considering pupils' outcomes over a period of time, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2012, result of teachers' assessments at the expected level (outcome 5+) in language development, mathematical development and the Foundation Phase indicator do not compare favourably with the averages for the family and Wales. Results in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity are slightly higher than the family and all-Wales averages.

Compared with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school was in the bottom 25% in mathematical development, in the lower 50% in language development and the Foundation Phase indicator, and in the top 50% in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

In the Foundation Phase, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher outcome (outcome 6) in 2012 in language, literacy and communications skills in Welsh was higher than the family and national averages. However, the percentages for mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity were significantly lower. In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher level in key stage 2 (level 5) was significantly lower than the family and national averages in all core subjects.

Results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level (level 4+) during recent years have been inconsistent in comparison with the family and Wales averages. The percentage of pupils who achieved the expected outcome in the core subject indicator and in Welsh, English, mathematics and science in 2012 was lower than the family and Wales averages.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher level (level 5) in 2012 was lower than the family and Wales averages in all core subjects. In mathematics and science, the percentage has been lower than the averages for the family and Wales during three of the last five years. In Welsh, the percentage has been lower than the Wales average during three of the last five years. In English, the percentage has been lower than the averages for the family and Wales during four of the last five years.

In general, there has been a pattern of girls achieving better than boys in key stage 2 during recent years, particularly in language, with the gap becoming bigger at the higher than expected levels.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Questionnaires were received from 120 pupils at the school. In general, the responses are positive and are similar to the average across Wales.

All pupils say that:

- the school teaches them how to keep healthy.

Most pupils say that:

- they feel safe in school and there are many opportunities for them to get regular exercise at school;
- they know whom to talk to if they are worried about something;
- teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress;
- the school deals well with any bullying;
- they make good progress at school;
- homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school; and
- they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work difficult.

The majority of pupils say that:

- nearly all pupils behave well at playtime and lunch time; and
- they believe that other children behave well and they can get their work done.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-eight parents responded to the questionnaire. In general, the responses are positive, however, they are not as positive as the average across Wales in some aspects.

Most parents say that:

- their child likes the school;
- their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise; and
- staff expect their child to work hard and do his or her best.

Many parents say that:

- pupils behave well in school and their child feels safe at school;
- teaching is good, the homework that is given builds well on what their child learns in school and their child makes good progress at school;

A report on Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen
June 2013

- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem;
- they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints;
- the school helps their child to become more mature and shoulder responsibility and staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- the school is well run;
- there is a good range of activities including trips or visits;
- they receive regular information about their child's progress;
- their child is prepared well for moving on to the next school; and
- they are satisfied with the school, overall.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Tristan Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Anwen Griffith	Team Inspector
Rhian Jones	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Hefin Jones	Peer Inspector
Cerian Roberts	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.