



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 Gymunedol Aberbanc
Penrhiwllan
Llandysul
Ceredigion
SA44 5NP**

Date of inspection: January 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

This small rural school is situated in the village of Aberbanc on the main road between Llandysul and Newcastle Emlyn in Ceredigion. Most pupils live in the village and the surrounding rural area. The school describes the area as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. At present, no pupils receive free school meals.

There are 33 pupils between the ages of four and 11 on roll. Pupils are taught by two teachers in two mixed-age classes. Nine per cent of pupils have additional learning needs, which is lower than the national average. None of them has a statement of special educational needs.

Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning and the aim is to ensure that all pupils are fluent in Welsh and English by the time they transfer to the secondary sector. About 21% of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is spoken. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds at the school.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2001.

The last inspection was conducted in March 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Aberbanc in 2012-2013 is £4,648. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Ceredigion is £12,284 and the minimum is £2,820. Ysgol Aberbanc is in 19th position out of the 58 primary schools in Ceredigion in terms of the school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make appropriate progress from their starting point;
- pupils' performance at the end of key stage 2 is consistently higher than the average of the family of similar schools;
- the staff offer pupils a range of interesting learning experiences within and outside school;
- the quality of teaching is good on the whole;
- pupils behave very well and show good attitudes towards learning; and
- the homely and caring ethos promotes pupils' wellbeing and development effectively.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher's effective leadership offers a sense of purpose to the school's life and work;
- the whole staff share the same values and co-operate well as a team;
- self-evaluation procedures identify and prioritise appropriate areas for improvement;
- the improvement plan provides clear guidance for moving the school forward; and the
- close co-operation with the governing body, parents and other partners has a constructive influence on the school's work.

Recommendations

- R1 Extend pupils' creative and extended writing skills in addition to their information and communications technology skills
- R2 Strengthen short-term planning to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate challenge and develop their skills consistently
- R3 Expand the use of assessment for learning and ensure consistency in the quality of the written feedback that is offered to pupils
- R4 Strengthen self-evaluation procedures by developing arrangements for monitoring pupils' wider learning skills

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Across the school, pupils' listening skills are very good. The majority of pupils can recall previous learning effectively and they use this information purposefully in their work. Most pupils communicate naturally in Welsh when discussing their work in lessons and informally in different situations. They use a range of vocabulary that is appropriate to their age and ability. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils discuss freely and express their ideas clearly in Welsh and English.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils read with appropriate expression and understanding. They use a range of strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words successfully. In key stage 2, most older pupils read correctly and meaningfully in Welsh and English. They can discuss effectively the main elements of the stories and books that they like or dislike. The reading skills of a few pupils at the bottom of key stage 2 are more uneven. In general, they do not read with sufficient fluency and understanding.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils write independently for a range of purposes and they are beginning to vary sentences and punctuate correctly. In key stage 2, pupils write appropriately for a range of purposes in Welsh and English. However, examples of creative and extended writing across the curriculum are more limited. A minority of pupils' grasp of spelling skills is less secure.

Across the school, most pupils use their investigation and problem-solving skills effectively in aspects of their work. Their use of independent learning skills and of information and communications technology skills is more uneven.

Results of teachers' assessments must be treated with care because the small numbers of pupils in a year and the percentage of pupils who have additional learning needs can have a significant effect on the school's performance from one year to the next.

In 2012, pupils' performance at the end of the Foundation Phase is lower than the averages for the family of similar schools and for Wales in all areas of learning. In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, results place the school among the bottom 25%. Scrutiny of pupils' current work shows that most pupils make good progress in comparison with their age and stage of development.

Over the last four years, pupils' performance at the end of key stage 2 is consistently higher than the averages for the family of schools and Wales in mathematics and science and in English in most years. They are more uneven in Welsh. In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, results place the school in the top 25% of schools.

At the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieve higher outcomes, namely outcome 6, is lower than the family of schools in all areas. Over the last four years, the percentage of pupils at the end of key stage 2 who achieve higher levels, namely level 5, varies in comparison with similar schools. Except for Welsh, results show improvement in 2012 and outcomes are higher than the averages for the family of schools in all subjects.

There is no consistent pattern of difference between boys' and girls' results. Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress and achieve their targets. As the number of pupils at the school is small, it is not possible to compare the achievement of pupils who receive free school meals with those who are not entitled to do so.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils take pride in their school and in the community. In discussions, they confirm that they feel safe and that they are appreciated in a caring environment. They are courteous and show respect for each other and for teachers. Most pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of taking regular physical exercise.

Pupils' attendance during the last three years varies between the top 25% and the top 50% in comparison with similar schools. All pupils are punctual.

Most pupils show interest in their learning and co-operate effectively within the classroom. All pupils behave very well in class and around the school.

Pupils play an active part in school life. The school council, which also has responsibility for eco issues, contributes appropriately to the school's work. Members do not contribute specifically to decisions about the school's activities and their education.

Opportunities to contribute to services and concerts in the community develop pupils' social and life skills further.

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

The school provides an appropriate range of learning experiences that meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, and reflects the principles of the Foundation Phase. The school's curricular and general activities, including extra-curricular provision, broaden pupils' learning experiences and promote their personal and social development.

Long-term plans identify suitable opportunities to develop pupils' thinking, communication, numeracy and information and communications technology skills. However, short-term planning does not ensure that all pupils extend their skills consistently through the activities that are provided.

Provision for developing the Welsh language enables pupils to make good progress. All staff offer pupils good language models. This has a very positive effect on pupils' oral skills across the school. The school also provides a range of appropriate opportunities for pupils to study the local environment and Welsh history and culture. The use of visits to places of historical interest enriches learning further.

Through a wide range of activities, pupils' understanding of sustainability and global citizenship is promoted effectively. Constructive use is made of opportunities across the curriculum, international days, links with other countries and fair trade activities to develop pupils' understanding of their role as members of a wider community.

Teaching: Good

Teachers possess secure subject knowledge. This is reflected in the constructive use of subject skills in leading the learning. There is a good working relationship between teachers and pupils, and classroom assistants make an effective contribution to learning and to pupils' wellbeing across the school.

The quality of teaching is good on the whole. The good use of teaching approaches, a consistent focus on building on previous work, skilful questioning and appropriate tasks motivate pupils. In a minority of lessons, introductions are too long and there is too much direction of work. Activities are not always planned in enough detail to challenge more able pupils.

The school has suitable procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Outcomes are analysed and used appropriately to monitor progress and to provide additional support to pupils as necessary.

Teachers have embedded some assessment for learning strategies in their practice but they have not been established sufficiently to have a consistent influence on the quality of learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the oral feedback provided assists pupils to identify the next steps to be taken. Written feedback is more uneven.

Reports to parents meet statutory requirements and provide full information about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a warm and welcoming community. Effective arrangements are in place to support pupils' health and wellbeing. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and there are appropriate opportunities to improve their fitness and health. The school promotes good attendance consistently and ensures that pupils and parents are aware of its expectations.

There is effective provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The emphasis on good values and respect for others is a prominent feature in the classroom, collective worship and circle time sessions.

The school has an effective link with specialist agencies and visits from health visitors, an inclusion officer and the police are used to reinforce provision.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding and they are not a cause for concern. There is clear guidance for all members of staff and they are aware of the requirements.

Staff use suitable processes to identify pupils who have additional learning needs. All have individual education plans that include clear targets for the way forward. These plans are reviewed regularly and are updated following consultation with pupils and their parents. They have a positive effect on promoting pupils' progress and development.

Learning environment: Good

The school's inclusive and caring ethos promotes equal opportunities for all pupils to take advantage of the full range of educational provision. Pupils' awareness of equality and diversity is developed effectively. A great deal of emphasis is placed on co-operation and respecting the contributions of others. There are suitable access arrangements for disabled pupils.

The building provides a range of classrooms and learning areas which are used fully to support pupils' learning. Displays of pupils' work contribute to creating an interesting and colourful environment. The school is located on a pleasant site and the outdoor areas are used effectively to enrich experiences in the Foundation Phase.

There is an adequate supply of resources to support learning in the majority of areas and they are used effectively by staff. However, there is a shortage of information and communications technology resources, and of fiction and factual books in the library.

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

The headteacher's effective leadership offers a sense of purpose to the school's life and work. The whole staff share the same values regarding pupils' education and wellbeing. They co-operate effectively and this has a positive influence on provision and on pupils' achievement.

The school has a range of current policies that focus on meeting pupils' needs and on guiding the school's work effectively. Appropriate use is made of data analysis in order to measure pupils' progress and to prioritise aspects to receive further attention.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. Members have a secure understanding of the educational provision and of the school's performance in comparison with similar schools. They contribute purposefully to the self-evaluation process and succeed in balancing their constant support with being critical friends.

The school pays appropriate attention to local and national priorities. The Foundation Phase has been established and suitable procedures are in place to raise standards of literacy and numeracy further. Pupils' bilingual proficiency is promoted effectively.

Improving quality: Good

The headteacher and staff evaluate the school's performance appropriately and have a clear understanding of its strengths and the main areas for development. In addition, suitable use is made of the views of parents, pupils, governors and the local authority in this context. This is reflected in the comprehensive self-evaluation report that includes a detailed analysis of the school's data and priorities in terms of improving pupils' achievement.

The school uses a range of appropriate procedures for collecting information about the quality of teaching and learning. They include data analysis, observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and evaluating various aspects of learning areas. Outcomes are recorded and the information analysed to promote improvements such as strengthening older pupils' Welsh literacy skills. Some evaluation procedures, such as monitoring the development of pupils' wider learning skills, have not been developed fully.

The outcomes of the self-evaluation process have a clear influence on priorities in the school's improvement plan. The improvement plan outlines the way forward for the school and includes details on a suitable range of implementation arrangements.

The school is part of a professional network of local schools. This has a positive influence on the school's practices and standards, especially when developing literacy and numeracy skills, and expanding the provision in the Foundation Phase. The opportunity to contribute to a professional learning community to promote transition plans between the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 is a beneficial development for teachers.

Partnership working: Good

The school has an effective range of strategic partners, including local authority improvement officers, pupil support specialists and athrawon bro who help the school to develop elements of its provision continuously.

There is a good relationship between the school and parents. Parents are very supportive of the school and contribute to a range of activities, including raising money to buy additional resources, which enrich pupils' experiences.

Co-operation with local schools contributes increasingly to elements involving curricular provision and moderating pupils' work. There are effective transition arrangements for children who transfer from the nursery setting to the school and for pupils who transfer to the two local secondary schools. The close links with the local further education colleges include opportunities for pupils to receive lessons in specific subjects and to use the learning facilities.

Visits to the community and use of local individuals' expertise make an important contribution to pupils' learning experiences. Through a range of activities, the school contributes effectively to the life of the community and makes regular use of the swimming pool and the library to develop pupils' learning skills.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources effectively. A sufficient number of teachers and support staff are employed to cater for pupils' wellbeing and learning requirements. Good use is made of teachers' subject expertise by exchanging classes for some lessons.

Good emphasis is placed on all staff's continuous professional development and appropriate performance management processes promote this further. Teachers make suitable use of their non-contact time for planning, preparation and assessment of pupils' work.

The school building and site are well-maintained and there is an adequate supply of resources to provide a range of learning experiences in the majority of subjects.

On the whole, financial resources are managed effectively. Expenditure is monitored regularly by the headteacher, governors and the local authority. It is ensured that expenditure matches pupils' requirements and the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

Considering pupils' progress and outcomes, the school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Results of teachers' assessments must be treated with care because small numbers of pupils in a year group and the percentage of pupils who have additional learning needs can have a significant effect on the school's performance from one year to the next.

In 2012, the percentage of pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase who achieve the expected levels is lower than the averages for the family of similar schools in language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, results place the school among the bottom 25% in all areas.

Over the last four years, pupils' results at the end of key stage 2 are consistently higher than the family of schools and Wales in mathematics and science and higher in English in most years. They are more uneven in Welsh. They are higher than the averages for the family of schools and Wales in two of the four years.

In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, results place the school among the top 25% consistently in mathematics and science and in English in most years. Results in Welsh vary between the top and bottom 25%.

The percentage of pupils who achieve the higher outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012 is lower than the averages for the family of schools in the development of language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieve the higher levels in 2012 is better than the family of schools' averages in English, mathematics and science but lower in Welsh. Results in previous years are uneven.

There is no consistent pattern in the difference between boys' and girls' results. Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress and achieve their targets. Because of the very small numbers, it is not possible to compare the achievement of pupils who receive free school meals and those who are not entitled to do so.

Over four years, pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2 in English oral, reading and writing skills is consistently higher than the family of school' averages. Welsh oral, reading and writing skills are more uneven.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

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

The responses offer a positive picture that compares well with the national averages for primary schools.

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on parent questionnaires because of the small number of responses that were received.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Rhian Jones	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Bethan Bleddyn	Peer Inspector
Rhiannon Ainsworth	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.