



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 Trimsaran
Heol Llanelli
Trimsaran
Kidwelly
SA17 4AG**

Date of inspection: April 2012

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English)

© Crown Copyright 2012: 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: 06/07/2012

Context

Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Trimsaran is situated in the centre of the large village of Trimsaran near Kidwelly, and it is maintained by Carmarthenshire local authority. During the inspection, there were 145 pupils aged between four and 11 on roll, and 29 full-time nursery age children. There has been a reduction of about 17% in pupil numbers during the last five years.

The school has been designated 'category A/B' under Carmarthenshire's language policy. However, the school is in the last two years of changing to be a 'category A' school. Welsh is now the main medium of teaching for all classes apart from one English-medium class in Years 5 and 6, where Welsh is taught as a second language.

The school serves an area that is socially and economically disadvantaged. According to the school, 58 pupils have special educational needs, which is considerably higher than the national figure. About 36% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure that is considerably higher than the averages for Carmarthenshire and the whole of Wales.

The attainment levels of half the pupils on entry to the school are weak, and only about 10% are higher than average.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Trimsaran in 2011-2012 is £3,542. The maximum per pupil in Carmarthenshire primary schools is £18,947 and the minimum is £3,114. Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Trimsaran is in 55th place out of the 110 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of 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:

- nearly all pupils make good progress during their time at the school;
- teaching is generally good across the school;
- there is a good working relationship between pupils and teachers, and support staff; and
- there are high standards of wellbeing.

However

- written comments on pupils' work do not give sufficient attention to showing them how to improve.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher is working effectively with the senior management team, the governing body, staff and learners to develop an agreed vision and objectives;
- the contribution of the governing body as a critical friend contributes fully to school improvement systems; and
- the school evaluates its strengths and the areas that need improvement successfully, and relevant needs are being prioritised effectively in the improvement plans.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 ensure more progress in the work of higher ability pupils;
- R2 ensure consistency in the response to pupils' written work that shows them the way forward in their learning;
- R3 ensure consistency in the standard of pupils' presentation of work; and
- R4 develop performance management procedures for support staff.

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

Although the results of pupils' baseline assessments at the time they start school are low, nearly all pupils make appropriate progress during their time at the school.

The results of seven-year-old pupils compare well with the results of similar schools over time. Pupils' oral standards have been improving over time and they compare well with similar schools and all-Wales averages, but the results of teachers' assessments of reading and writing are declining. Apart from in 2010, pupils' standards of reading and writing have been considerably lower than similar schools and all-Wales averages. Apart from in 2011, standards in mathematics have compared favourably with standards in similar schools over time. Standards in science consistently compare favourably with standards in similar schools.

Results for 11-year-old pupils show progress during the last three years and compare well with the results for similar schools. Although standards in both languages have shown progress recently, standards of writing, specifically, have been falling. Standards of writing in English compare favourably with the average for similar schools, but are lower than the all-Wales average, and standards of writing in Welsh, apart from in 2009, are consistently lower than similar schools and all-Wales averages. Over a period of time, the percentage of pupils who reach the expected level (level 4) in mathematics and science has been consistently higher than the average results for similar schools and for schools nationally.

Reading and writing skills, according to teachers' assessments at the end of a key stage, do not reflect the standards of work that are demonstrated in the school at present. High standards were seen in pupils' books, especially in writing at the top end of the school.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals are achieving well, and pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. However, the most able pupils do not always achieve to their full ability, according to evidence seen of pupils' work, analysis of the school's data and lesson observations. Level 3 results for language and level 5 for English, mathematics and science have been showing a downward pattern over three years, and they are all lower than the results for similar schools and schools nationally for the higher levels.

There is no significant difference between boys' achievements in comparison with those of girls, except in writing where boys perform considerably lower than girls.

In lessons, pupils recall previous learning well. They can discuss in a mature manner, listen to the opinions of others and use learning partners effectively. On the whole, they are making good progress against lesson aims. Pupils use thinking skills effectively in the majority of lessons. Most pupils apply their key skills across the curriculum effectively and they are making good progress in their language skills.

Many of them communicate fluently, expressing opinions confidently and reading with good understanding and expression. Most older children write independently in a wide variety of forms, using a relevant range of vocabulary and varied expression. However, the standard of pupils' presentation of work is not consistently good across the school.

Most pupils use their numeracy and information and communication technology skills successfully for a number of purposes, such as collecting information and presenting data. Older pupils use computer tablets extremely effectively in order to combine numeracy, information and communication technology and science skills in the same activities. Activities such as a study and analysis of a residential trip ensure that many of them develop good problem-solving skills.

Although a number of pupils do not speak Welsh when they start school, they deal with the Welsh language confidently very soon after starting school and the Welsh dimension is core to the school's work and ethos. This means that pupils' knowledge of the history, geography and culture of Wales is good.

Pupils in the English class are making appropriate progress in the Welsh language. Nearly all of them use Welsh effectively in wider contexts than specific Welsh lessons, in assemblies, around the school and in extra-curricular activities.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils have a good understanding of what needs to be done to be healthy. They understand clearly which foods are healthy and the importance of regular physical exercise to keep healthy. The children feel safe at school and they are confident that adults will listen to them if something is worrying them.

Pupils' behaviour towards one another and towards adults is good. The school has done much to improve the attendance percentage, which is now in the upper 50% of levels for similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

The eco council, the school council and the SNAC group help pupils to learn decision making and co-operation skills that prepare them to be full members of the local community. They also encourage pupils to think about eating healthily by looking at the contents of lunchtime sandwich boxes and offering more healthy options.

Nearly all pupils show respect, care and concern towards themselves and others and their awareness and understanding of personal and social values are an obvious strength at the school.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
---	-------------

Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a good range of rich learning experiences that respond fully to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education. The range of visits outside the school, visitors to the school and

extra-curricular activities contribute considerably to expanding and enriching these learning experiences. Joint planning ensures that lessons are stimulating and that there is obvious progression in pupils' learning. However, there is little reference in the plans to provision for more able and talented pupils.

The school provides communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. Planning for developing pupils' oral and written skills across the school is good, and includes effective intervention plans for target groups in reading and writing.

Provision for developing Welsh language speaking skills is effective and teachers and assistants offer good linguistic models. The Welsh dimension receives due attention in the school's work and good use is made of displays on Wales, where pupils bring in pictures of themselves next to different landmarks around the country and write a short piece about them. The school's campaign to give a wrist band to Welsh speakers has encouraged children to speak more Welsh around the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn about the history, culture and traditions of their area and their country.

Pupils have a clear understanding of sustainable living. A wide range of experiences is offered, which motivates pupils to make sustainable decisions and helps them to understand the implications of different decisions. Through activities in the area of nature land near the school, pupils have had very good experiences of co-operating with agencies in the community to improve the local environment and to understand better their role in caring for the local environment. This area is of long term use in offering wide learning experiences to pupils.

Scarce attention is paid to studies of global citizenship throughout the school.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching ensures that motivation is high in most pupils and they show interest in their learning.

Staff and support staff have a good working relationship with pupils, and teachers ensure that learning outcomes are clear. They use a range of teaching styles and resources effectively, and many of the activities are challenging and interesting.

Purposeful lesson plans and support from adults contribute effectively to the quality of the experiences offered to pupils. Effective emphasis in lessons is placed on developing key skills. In the few lessons where the teaching is less effective, questioning is not always challenging and open-ended enough, and not all pupils develop to be independent learners.

Teachers use assessments of pupils' work appropriately when planning follow-up lessons, and this is a strength in the school. Assessment for learning principles are well rooted in the majority of classes. However, written comments on pupils' work do not always give sufficient attention to showing them how to improve.

The school has comprehensive progress tracking systems that allow teachers to identify pupils' attainment as well as the next steps in their education. The use of work portfolios and the school's standardisation and moderation processes are valuable, and facilitate the process of determining levels successfully.

Reports on pupils' progress are appropriate and parents have the opportunity to respond in writing to them.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school offers a wide range of experiences to encourage pupils to be healthy and make healthy choices, including a number of extra-curricular activities that contribute effectively to this. The emphasis on good values and respecting others is an obvious feature of guidance within the class and in the whole school's assemblies. Through activities such as circle time, pupils feel that adults respect their feelings and listen to them.

The school co-operates successfully with external agencies to offer comprehensive care and education to pupils. The school promotes children's Welshness through a number of activities in the classroom and extra-curricular activities. Children have extensive opportunities to take part in Urdd activities.

The school has appropriate procedures and a policy for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective, and concerns are responded to in a timely manner. The school's early identification of the needs of young pupils is a strength. The school makes beneficial use of specialist services such as the behaviour support team, advisory teachers and educational psychologists.

The individual education plans are detailed and comply with statutory requirements. They are evaluated and updated effectively and regularly and the school consults appropriately with pupils and parents as part of the process.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive, caring community in which pupils feel happy and safe. The school's homely, supportive ethos ensures that pupils achieve and get along well together.

Pupils are encouraged to show respect, care and concern towards themselves and others, and they have a good relationship with their peers and the school's staff. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and boys and girls take part in all activities. The way in which the school ensures equal opportunities for pupils, irrespective of their background, is a strength.

Respect for diversity and racial equality is promoted successfully through personal and social education programmes and by promoting personal and social values extremely successfully. The school has effective plans and a policy for dealing with cases of racism, and there is an appropriate accessibility policy and plan in place.

The building is old and, in places, is in a poor condition. However, imaginative use is seen of the empty spaces with colourful, stimulating displays. There are a good number of resources that are used effectively to offer pupils a wide range of experiences.

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

Leadership: Good

The headteacher has worked effectively with the senior management team, the governing body, staff and learners to develop an agreed vision and objectives for the school. Elements of the role of the senior management team were reviewed recently, ensuring a suitable range of responsibilities among its members. The staff and senior management team's weekly meetings focus appropriately on the school's priorities for improvement. This has established a culture that promotes improvement. Data is analysed well in order to evaluate performance across the school and the increasing use of the local authority's central database supports this work.

The governing body has a very good understanding of how the school is performing in comparison with other schools. The body receives detailed analyses of performance data and is aware of the relevant issues that arise from it. Governors contribute fully to the arrangements for school improvement and they have worked very effectively with the headteacher and with other staff to develop the strategic plan and the development plan. The contribution of the governing body as a critical friend is a strength.

The school development plans give suitable consideration to local and national priorities. The Foundation Phase has been rooted fully in the school's organisation. Embedding other initiatives such as assessment for learning and thinking skills into the school's day-to-day work has had a positive impact on pupils' standards.

Improving quality: Good

The school has developed effective self-evaluation arrangements, which focus on pupils' standards. The arrangements include a detailed analysis of performance data and pay good attention to parents' and pupils' opinions. They also give appropriate consideration to local and national initiatives and appropriate attention to reports, following visits from local authority officers. The school has established a monitoring cycle that strengthens the evaluation arrangements.

The school evaluates its strengths and the areas that need improvement effectively and the relevant needs are prioritised effectively in the improvement plans. The school's strategic plan ensures an effective overview of these plans and the school development plan gives appropriate details on the implementation arrangements. It includes a manageable number of targets for improvement and suitable criteria against which to measure progress. It also notes clearly who is responsible for the various aspects and outlines specific timetables for completion. The school has made good progress in implementing improvement priorities during the last two years.

Arrangements for sharing good practice within the school, including observing lessons, are developing and this is already improving the quality of teaching. The school benefits from the commitment of a number of teachers and classroom assistants to professional learning communities. For example, the commitment of the deputy headteacher and classroom assistant to a learning community to develop the 'hwb ymlaen' scheme has had a positive impact on the numeracy skills of a cohort of pupils in key stage 2.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a good range of partnerships with parents and carers, other educational providers and the local community. Many parents co-operate effectively with the school to support pupils' reading skills. In addition, a few have contributed well towards developing the school garden and other aspects of the external grounds. The day to day links, and the contact arrangements through newsletter, the website and text messages ensure that parents receive suitable and timely information about the life and work of the school.

The school has good links with the cylch meithrin in the village and with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. There is an effective range of transition activities, promoting pupils' wellbeing and facilitating elements of continuity in their work and experience. Good links exist with a local college and an initial teacher training provider and the school contributes regularly to the practical aspects of training students. The school benefits from its close co-operation with other schools within the families of the secondary school, which includes effective arrangements for standardisation and moderation of pupils' work. In addition, the quality of provision benefits from a close partnership with the sports centre in the village.

Resource management: Good

The school is appropriately staffed to teach the whole curriculum effectively and good use is made of the experience, interests and expertise of staff. The professional relationship between the teachers and the learning assistants is effective and the arrangements for meeting staff's professional development needs are good. The arrangements that are in place for planning, preparation and assessment needs are effective.

There are suitable performance management arrangements in place for the teaching staff but no relevant arrangements exist for learning assistants and other staff.

The school has a good range of appropriate resources.

Financial resources are managed very well and information is used from financial monitoring reports in order to adapt expenditure plans when necessary. There is an appropriate balance between the responsibilities of governors and the headteacher in relation to authorising expenditure.

The school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2011, the percentage of pupils who reached the expected level (level 2) in Welsh in key stage 1 was lower than the average for Welsh schools and a little lower than the family of similar schools average. The percentage who reached level 2 in oracy was a little higher than the average for similar schools, but the percentage in reading and writing was considerably lower than the average for Wales and the family. The percentage of pupils who attained the expected level in mathematics was lower than the average for the family of similar schools and for Wales. In science, the percentage was higher than the family average but lower than that of Wales.

An upward trend was seen in the standards of Welsh (level 2) from 2008 and the school rose from the lower 50% to the higher 50% in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The oral results show a pattern of progress over the last five years but, apart from in 2010, there is a considerable downward pattern in the standards of reading and writing.

Results for mathematics are fairly even over a period of time and the school's results follow the pattern of the family's average, apart from in 2011 when a fall was seen in the results, to be lower than the family and Wales averages. Level 2 results in science tend to follow the pattern of the family and increase gradually. In terms of the expected performance in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination, the school's results in key stage 1 are lower than the average for Wales and for the family of schools. These results place the school among the bottom 25% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The school is in the bottom 25% in relation to mathematics, within the lower 50% in science, and within the upper 50% in Welsh.

The percentage attaining beyond the expected level (level 3 or higher) this year in key stage 1 was lower than family and Wales averages in Welsh. The school's level 3 results in mathematics were higher than the family and all-Wales averages and considerably higher in science. Although the trend is generally downward in Welsh (level 3), the average is close to the average for the family of similar schools. The trend is generally upward for mathematics results and the school's average has been higher than the averages for the family and Wales in two of the last three years. The results for level 3 science have risen considerably over the last three years.

There is a significant difference between the standard of girls' writing and that of boys, with girls performing better than boys. In mathematics, boys perform better than girls in attaining level 2, which is different from the national pattern. In general, girls have tended to reach level 3 more often than boys over the last five years.

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level (level 4) in Welsh in key stage 2 in 2011 was higher than the average for the family and for Wales. The percentage reaching level 4 in oracy and reading was higher than the average for similar schools and Wales, but the percentage in writing was considerably below the average for Wales and the family. The percentage of pupils who attained the

expected level in English was higher than the average for the family but lower than the average for Wales. The results for English oracy were higher than the average for the family and for Wales, but the results for reading and writing in English were lower than of the average for Wales and very close to the average for the family. The percentage of pupils who attained the expected level in mathematics and science were higher than the average for the family of similar schools but lower than the average for Wales.

In terms of the expected performance in Welsh, English, mathematics and science in combination, the school's results in key stage 2 are higher than the average for the family, but lower than that of Wales.

When comparing the school with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, in 2010-2011 the school was in the lower 50% for English, mathematics, science and the subjects in combination, and in the upper 50% for Welsh.

Welsh has had a very varied trend over a period of five years and results have been considerably lower than average for the family and Wales in two of the last three years, but this year they have been higher than the averages for the family and Wales. The results for oracy and reading show a general trend of improvement, but the trend for results in writing are downward.

English performance has a fairly even trend and oracy and reading were downward until this year. Writing has had a downward trend for five years. Results for mathematics have been consistently higher than family and Wales averages until this year, and the same is true for mathematics, with results in both subjects being higher than the averages for the family but lower than for those of Wales this year.

No pupils have attained beyond the expected level (level 5 or higher) in Welsh in 2011. Level 5 results for English and mathematics have been lower than the average for the family and Wales. Level 5 results for science have been higher than family averages but lower than those of Wales. There has been a downward trend in every subject at level 5 over a period of at least three years.

When considering the results for boys and girls, boys excel considerably in Welsh oracy, reading and writing and also in the level 5 results for science. Girls excel in the level 4 results for mathematics and science.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

In general, parents have responded positively to the questionnaire.

Most feel that their children like school, are making good progress and are safe at school. They feel that the children behave well at school and that staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. They feel comfortable in asking a question of the school and they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. Most feel that the school helps their children to become more mature and take responsibility, and they feel that there is a good variety of activities such as trips or visits by the school.

Many parents are happy with the school on the whole, and feel that the teaching is good, that homework builds on what the children are learning and that teachers treat their children fairly. Many feel that they receive regular information about their children's progress, and they also feel that their children are prepared well for moving on to the next school. They feel that the school is run well.

On the whole, the responses are positive but, in the case of about a third of the questions, the percentage of positive answers is significantly lower than the average for primary schools in Wales.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Seventy-four key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. Nearly all state that they feel safe in school and know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious.

Most say that the school deals well with any bullying. In addition, most feel that the school teaches them to keep healthy, and that there are many opportunities at school to take regular physical exercise. Also, most feel that they are doing well at school and that homework helps them to understand and improve their work at school.

They all state that teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress. In addition, they all know what to do and to whom to speak if they find the work difficult.

Nearly all of them feel that there are enough books, equipment and computers for them to do their work.

Many of them feel that behaviour is good within the school and that there is no misbehaviour to affect their ability to work.

On the whole, the responses follow the national pattern for pupils' questionnaires, but a few less positive responses were seen in the questions on behaviour than are seen nationally.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mike Hayes	Reporting Inspector
Iwan Roberts	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Garem Jackson	Peer Inspector
Sharon Owen	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority. If it is available, the data report can be seen on our website alongside this report.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.