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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Llanddarog VC Primary School
Llanddarog
Carmarthen
SA32 8BJ**

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

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Publication date: 25/04/2013

Context

Llanddarog Voluntary Controlled Primary School is situated in the village of Llanddarog in Carmarthenshire. It is a Welsh-medium school in the charge of the Church in Wales. It serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area. Over 45% of pupils come from outside the school's normal catchment area. The school describes the area from which the children come as one that is, on the whole, fairly prosperous.

Eighty-one pupils are on roll, including full-time nursery children. These numbers have increased gradually over the last three years.

Seventy per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. At present, four per cent of pupils in the school come from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than the county and national percentages. Twenty-one per cent of pupils receive support for additional education needs. No permanent or temporary exclusions were recorded in the year before the inspection.

Following a term as acting headteacher, the current headteacher started permanently in post in September 2012.

The budget per pupil for Llanddarog Voluntary Controlled Primary School in 2012-2013 is £3,294. The maximum in terms of school budget per pupil in primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £25,997 and the minimum is £2,878. Llanddarog Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in 92nd position out of the 108 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's performance is adequate because:

- pupils across the school communicate confidently and successfully in Welsh;
- pupils' attendance levels are high, consistently among the top 25% in comparison with pupils in similar schools;
- there is effective provision to promote pupils' wellbeing and their development as full and responsible individuals; and
- the school provides a wide range of experiences that gain pupils' interest and stimulates them to learn.

However:

- there is not enough progress in the writing skills of a minority of pupils at the top of the school;
- tasks do not always offer an appropriate challenge for pupils, especially pupils of higher ability in key stage 2;
- schemes of work in key stage 2 do not pay enough attention to developing numeracy skills across the curriculum; and
- there is no consistency in terms of marking and what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has created a clear vision for staff, pupils, governors and parents;
- all members of staff understand their responsibilities well in direct relation to the school's strategic plans;
- the school's improvement plan identifies clearly the priorities for improvement; and
- the self-evaluation document is thorough and gives a clear picture of the life of the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of extended writing, especially in key stage 2
- R2 Ensure further improvement in the numbers who achieve at the higher levels at the end of key stage 2
- R3 Ensure that numeracy skills are planned purposefully across the curriculum, and that plans are implemented consistently in key stage 2
- R4 Improve assessment arrangements by making better use of assessments in order to respond to the needs of all pupils
- R5 Develop the role of governors further to challenge the school about its performance
- R6 Address the building's shortcomings

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

In lessons, most pupils at Ysgol Llanddarog listen attentively, and contribute enthusiastically to classroom activities. They are confident learners and, in general, most of them make appropriate progress and achieve to the best of their ability. However, a minority of higher ability pupils are not achieving as well as they should, especially in key stage 2.

Pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress against their targets.

Across the school, pupils communicate confidently and successfully in Welsh and use appropriate vocabulary for their age and ability. Most pupils speak confidently in a variety of situations, and show a good grasp of the natural syntax of oral Welsh. The school's oldest pupils are confident when conversing in both languages, and most of them can converse intelligently in formal and informal situations.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils read books easily and with expression, and they use a range of reading strategies effectively when reading unfamiliar words. By the end of the phase, they can discuss content meaningfully and refer to events and characters in the book. The majority of pupils make appropriate progress in their writing. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most can write a sequence of sentences, showing an appropriate grasp of basic punctuation. The best pupils write imaginatively and independently, using a more extensive vocabulary to create effects.

In key stage 2, most pupils across the key stage read a range of reading materials successfully in both languages. Their understanding of reading is good as they glean specific information from a text. The best pupils discuss a range of reading materials in a mature way, and they express an opinion and liking of authors.

Overall, most pupils in key stage 2 write intelligently and show a sound awareness of punctuation and paragraphing, by following the characteristics of the form appropriately. However, there is not enough progress in the written work of a minority of pupils at the top of the school in terms of the range and quality of completed work. They do not write at length enough across a range of subjects in either language.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils make good progress in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication (ICT) skills. However, in key stage 2, these skills have not developed fully across a range of subjects.

In the Foundation Phase, the school's performance at the expected outcome (outcome 5) in all learning areas does not compare favourably with the performance of schools in the family, the authority and Wales, and it places the school in the bottom 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of free school meals. In

general, the picture is the same at the higher outcome. At the end of key stage 2, the school's performance in the core subjects in combination (Welsh, or English, mathematics and science) or in the individual subjects does not compare favourably with the averages for the family or Wales. Over a period of five years, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 at the higher level (level 5 or higher) has varied. However, in general, the performance has placed the school in the bottom 25% or the bottom 50% over time, compared with similar schools in terms of free school meals.

In general, standards of current work are more positive than the data shows over time.

Wellbeing: Good

The school is a caring community and pupils' enjoyment and their active part in school life are strong features. All pupils at the school feel safe and confident about to whom to turn if something is worrying them.

Attendance levels are high, and consistently among the top 25% in comparison with pupils in similar schools. Most pupils respect and care for each other and for adults. Pupils' behaviour is good. They respond politely and in a mature manner, and contribute well in lessons.

The school council and the eco council are enthusiastic and take an active part when making decisions, such as installing a friendship bench in the yard. They show a good awareness of health and healthy-eating issues. They are aware of the need to eat healthily through activities such as brushing teeth, keeping fit and the daily fruit shop.

Through a range of activities in the school, their participation in the community and extra-curricular activities, most pupils' social skills and life skills are developing effectively. In the Foundation Phase, pupils take responsibility increasingly and make decisions that have a positive effect on their learning. This has not been developed fully across key stage 2.

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

All teachers at the school provide a wide range of experiences that gain pupils' interest and stimulate them to learn. A number of visits and extra-curricular activities reinforce and enrich their experiences successfully. However, tasks do not always offer an appropriate challenge to the few more able pupils in key stage 2.

Teachers and assistants co-operate successfully in the Foundation Phase, and rich and stimulating experiences have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes. Individual lessons are planned effectively, and there are appropriate references to skills where relevant. Schemes of work in key stage 2 are comprehensive, and identify skills clearly. However, they do not always pay enough attention to developing numeracy skills across a range of subjects.

Provision for the Welsh dimension is embedded deeply across the school and enables learners to make good progress in their understanding of it. Pupils have numerous opportunities to develop their awareness of their local and national heritage through theme work and in aspects of art.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship has been developed fully across the curriculum. The enthusiastic eco council has a thorough understanding of environmental issues and is responsible for holding the annual Free Trade coffee afternoon, which is open to the local community.

Teaching: Adequate

The standard of teaching across the school is generally good. All teachers offer good language models and manage pupils' behaviour successfully.

In many lessons which include best practice, the aim of the lesson is clear and pupils take an active part in setting their own success criteria. There is probing questioning and appropriate intervention, which stimulates and challenges pupils to achieve well. In a few lessons in which teaching is not as good, tasks do not challenge pupils of higher ability sufficiently. Teaching methods in key stage 2 do not always offer enough opportunities for pupils to develop into independent learners.

All teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In the best examples, there is effective marking that refers to the success criteria and offers constructive comments on how to improve work. However, this is not consistent across the school.

In many classes, teachers use assessment for learning strategies effectively to encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learnt. However, the school does not use assessment findings to track pupils' progress effectively enough to plan on the basis of all pupils' needs.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The school is a caring community and there is effective provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship sessions and the school's personal and social education programme foster values such as honesty, tolerance and fairness and develop them as complete and responsible individuals. Through charitable activities, pupils have an opportunity to support people in their local community and the wider world.

There are good partnerships with a number of local authority agencies which have a positive effect on the development of pupils' wellbeing. The school has effective liaison arrangements with a range of support services, including the educational psychologist, the nurse and specialist teachers. This ensures that information and guidance are available for pupils, staff and parents as necessary.

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

The school has appropriate procedures and systems for identifying and supporting pupils who have additional learning needs. All pupils on the register have an

appropriate individual education plan, which is reviewed regularly in consultation with pupils and parents. Intervention programmes are now in place to support specific groups of pupils, but it is too early to measure their effect. However, the school does not measure the effect of intervention effectively enough in order to consider the next stages in their learning.

Learning environment: Adequate

The school is a welcoming and inclusive community that fosters an active and supportive ethos, which encourages respect and fairness successfully.

The school has a range of resources to support teaching and learning. There is enough land around the school and the school makes effective use of relevant resources. The Foundation Phase's indoor and outdoor areas offer a stimulating environment for promoting rich activities and experiences for the youngest pupils in the school.

However, the school buildings are old and parts of them are in a poor condition. A number of areas inside and outside the main building cause concern in terms of pupils' wellbeing, especially the school's window frames, the main building's internal wall and the school hall. There are not enough toilet facilities in the external buildings and this has an effect on learning time.

Attractive displays can be seen around the school, but, on the whole, there is only a little work by pupils on the walls.

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

The headteacher's leadership is strong and she has a clear vision for developing the school. Within a short time, she has conveyed her vision to staff, governors, pupils and parents. A number of effective procedures have been put in place recently, in order to raise standards of literacy throughout the school. All members of staff understand their responsibilities well, in direct relation to the school's strategic plans. Recently, appropriate responsibilities were allocated to staff as skill leaders in order to ensure the development of skills across the curriculum, but their role has not yet been established fully.

Staff meetings focus regularly on data analysis, the school's performance and setting targets for improvement. Teachers' understanding of the school's data and performance in comparison with schools in the family is developing well. They are aware of aspects which need to be developed further, and a number of strategies have now been implemented.

The governing body is very supportive of school life. Governors are regular visitors to the school and monitor teaching and learning regularly. Governors receive comprehensive reports about the school's performance and their understanding is developing well. However, they do not challenge and hold the school to account about its performance.

The school gives relevant attention to national and local priorities, including planning in order to raise standards of literacy and numeracy across the school.

Improving quality: Good

The school has a thorough self-evaluation document which gives a clear picture of the school's life and identifies correctly the aspects where improvement is needed. It has appropriate procedures for monitoring learning and teaching and they contribute effectively to setting priorities for improvement. The school also uses a wide range of other evidence, including performance data, and the opinion of governors, parents, staff and school pupils.

There is a close link between the findings of the self-evaluation and the school development plan. The development plan is detailed and includes a number of appropriate priorities which focus on improvements in performance. The plan includes measurable targets and specific sums of money that are linked to priorities. The plan ensures that all staff and members of the governing body play a part in implementing these strategies. This is a strength.

The school has responded fully to the recommendations of the last inspection.

The school co-operates closely with other local schools in order to raise standards of literacy.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a number of effective partners. A strong partnership exists with parents. The school's Parent Teacher Association is very active and raises money regularly to buy valuable resources that enrich learning. A number of evenings with parents are held in order to share information such as the principles of the Foundation Phase, and to give them guidance and support on aspects of literacy and numeracy, to help them to take a more active role in their children's education. The school's website, 'Ysgol Llanddarog's Eco News' and the use of technology are an effective resource for sharing information with the school's parents.

There are strong links with the local community which enrich pupils' learning experiences. There is a close partnership between the school and the National Botanical Garden in Llanarthne, and the school's oldest pupils visit regularly to look after their plants and vegetables. There are strong links with the Church, and the local vicar and the Bishop are regular visitors to the school.

The school co-operates successfully with the authority's enterprise and business officers in order to develop pupils' enterprise skills.

Effective arrangements have been established with the local nursery school in order to facilitate children's transfer to the school. The school works closely with schools in the catchment area to share good practice, to hold joint training and on projects to raise standards of literacy.

There is effective co-operation with the secondary school to ensure successful transition for pupils and to prepare them for the next stage in their education. There are effective arrangements for standardising and moderating assessments at the end of key stage 2.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has an appropriate level of staff and effective use is made of their expertise to enrich teaching and learning.

Appropriate performance management arrangements are in place for the school's teachers and assistants. All staff benefit from training that is arranged according to individuals' needs and the school's priorities.

The school meets statutory requirements regarding teachers' workload.

The school is in financial debt at present, but it is co-operating successfully with the authority to deal with the deficit in the budget through an appropriate business plan.

Considering pupils' outcomes, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The school's performance at the expected outcome (outcome 5) in all learning areas does not compare favourably with the schools in the family, the authority and Wales and performance places the school in the bottom 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of free school meals. The picture is the same at the higher outcome (outcome 6) except for the school's performance in personal development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, in which the school's performance is in the top 50% or the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

At the end of key stage 2, the school's performance over the last five years in the core subjects in combination (Welsh, or English, mathematics and science) or in individual subjects does not compare favourably with the family, the authority or with Wales. This performance has placed the school in the bottom 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. Over a period of five years, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 at the higher level (level 5 or higher) has varied. But in general, the school's performance has placed it in the bottom 25% to the bottom 50% for an extensive period of time in comparison with similar schools in terms of free school meals.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirty responses were received by pupils in key stage 2. The responses give a positive picture that is near or higher than national averages for primary schools for nearly all aspects.

All pupils feel safe at school. All pupils also indicate that they are doing well at school and that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress. They know what to do and to whom to turn if they find the work difficult. All pupils believe that there are many opportunities at the school to take regular physical exercise and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. Nearly all indicate that the school deals well with any bullying, which is higher than national percentages. All pupils know to whom to speak if they are worried. Many believe that other children behave well and that they are able to do their work. Nearly all pupils feel that children behave well at play times and lunch times.

Thirty-six responses were received from parents

Parents' responses are very positive and compare favourably with national averages. All parents agree or agree strongly that their child likes school and that he/she feels safe there. All parents are satisfied with the school in general, and feel that their child is making good progress. They also agree that teaching is good and that staff

expect their child to work hard and do his/her best. Most indicate that their child has additional support in relation to any specific needs and agree that they receive regular information about their child's progress. All parents feel safe about asking a question at the school, making suggestions or identifying a problem, and most of them are aware of the school's system for dealing with complaints. Nearly all parents feel that their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise.

All parents feel that the school is well-run.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Anwen Griffith	Reporting Inspector
Rhian Jones	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Dafydd Iolo Davies	Peer Inspector
Meinir Jones	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.