



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 y Bedol
Cwmamman Road
Glanamman
Ammanford
SA18 1DZ**

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.

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Context

Ysgol y Bedol is situated in Glanamman and it is maintained by Carmarthenshire local authority. The school's catchment area is Garnant and Glanamman. At present, it teaches 338 full-time pupils and 26 part-time nursery age pupils.

Welsh is the school's main language medium and the aim is that pupils are completely bilingual by the time they transfer to the secondary sector. Most pupils will transfer to Ysgol Dyffryn Aman at the end of their time at the school. Thirty-five per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. Five per cent are from an ethnic minority background.

The school states that the area in which the school is situated is economically disadvantaged. Twenty-seven point five per cent (27.5%) of pupils receive free school meals, which is higher than the national percentage.

One hundred pupils (33.8%) receive additional learning needs support, which is higher than the national figure (21.2%), including eight pupils who are statemented. No permanent or temporary exclusions were recorded during the year before the inspection.

The school provides for about a dozen key stage 2 pupils who have behavioural and emotional difficulties in a separate class called 'Y Gangen' (The Branch).

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol y Bedol in 2011-2012 is £3,326. The maximum school budget per pupil in Carmarthenshire schools is £18,947 and the minimum is £3,114. Ysgol y Bedol is in 79th position out of 100 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol y Bedol's current performance is good because:

- pupils' performance at seven and 11 years old is good;
- the standard of work seen in pupils' books and in many lessons is good;
- the school is a caring community that develops and promotes aspects of welfare and emotion well;
- a good range of learning experiences are enriched by a number of visits; and
- there are robust partnerships between the school and the wider community.

However:

- reading and writing skills in Welsh in key stage 2 have not developed fully; and
- in key stage 2, planning does not ensure a full range of experiences in science and information and communication technology.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear, robust vision that is shared with all the school's stakeholders;
- the school has set robust strategies in order to raise standards of literacy across the school, and this is beginning to have an effect on pupils' achievement;
- the senior management team and staff focus consistently on raising standards and ways of improving provision;
- there is a strong feeling of teamwork at all levels; and
- the school gives good value for money.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 continue to raise standards of reading and writing in Welsh in key stage 2;
- R2 ensure that all aspects of science and information and communication technology (ICT) are presented fully;
- R3 plan more regular opportunities to integrate 'Y Gangen' pupils into school life;
- R4 strengthen the self-evaluation process and ensure that the school development plan includes quantitative targets in order to measure an increase in standards;
and
- R5 strengthen the role of the governors as critical friends.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. Progress against the recommendations will be monitored by the local authority.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

In the Foundation Phase, the achievements of seven-year-old pupils at the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science (the core subjects) has risen from 74% in 2008 to 89% in 2011. This has placed the school among the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. The school's performance has been higher than the family average in Welsh in two of the last four years and in three of the last four years in science. The school has performed a little below the family average in mathematics for three of the last four years.

Pupils who attained level 3 or higher in science compare favourably with those in other schools in the family and results have been higher than family and all-Wales averages for three of the last four years. In the other subjects, performance at the higher level has compared favourably overall.

In key stage 2, the school's performance in the core subject indicator has increased during the last four years from 71% in 2008 to 86% in 2011, and has been higher than the average for the family during the last two years. The performance of 11-year-old pupils who attain the expected level in the core subject indicator in comparison with that of schools with similar percentages of pupils who are entitled to free school meals has increased from the bottom 25%-50% to the top 25% during the last five years. Girls have performed better than boys in the core subject indicator in three of the last five years.

In the individual core subjects, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 has been lower than the averages for the family for three of the last four years, but has compared favourably during the last two years.

The performance of pupils at level 5 or higher has not compared favourably with the averages for the family during the last four years, although there was significant improvement in 2011, and the performance compared favourably in Welsh and English.

Most pupils across the school co-operate and concentrate well. They build on previous learning, and are developing into independent learners. Pupils with special educational needs are making appropriate progress.

Nearly all pupils in the Foundation Phase are making good progress in their literacy skills. Most pupils have a firm grasp of oral language that is appropriate to their age and ability. They are becoming increasingly confident when speaking about their work and express themselves clearly. The majority are making appropriate progress in their reading skills. They read with expression and appropriate understanding of the text. Most are able to discuss enthusiastically the events in the stories they have read.

Most Foundation Phase pupils are making good progress in their ability to write independently. They use increasing vocabulary and phrases, and are beginning to vary their sentences and use appropriate punctuation in their work. The quality of presentation of work and handwriting of most pupils is good.

On the whole, key stage 2 pupils' oral skills in both languages are developing appropriately. The majority are confident when speaking about their work, to express an opinion and respond to questions. The reading skills of most pupils are developing very well in English. They read meaningfully and with expression. The majority of pupils use reading skills effectively in order to obtain specific information from a text. The majority are making appropriate progress in their reading in Welsh. Nearly all pupils are reading at a level that is suitable to their age and ability and the majority of them can discuss the book's content confidently. However, a minority of pupils show a lack of fluency when reading Welsh books. Pupils who are receiving additional support to improve their reading skills in English are making good progress.

In key stage 2, the majority of pupils are making good progress in their ability to write in a range of forms in both languages. The work of many pupils shows an appropriate standard in terms of accuracy of language, as well as the ability to paragraph and punctuate correctly. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils can write extended pieces of good quality across a range of subjects. However, the written work of a minority of pupils has not developed as well in Welsh. Key stage 2 pupils do not make enough use of redrafting to improve upon their first attempts.

Pupils' information and communication technology skills are developing well in the Foundation Phase. Elements of communication in key stage 2 are good. However, database and modelling skills have not been developed sufficiently.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know how they can keep healthy by eating sensibly and improving their fitness in physical exercise lessons and activities.

Nearly all pupils are willing learners and enjoy school life. The majority enjoy their lessons and voice sensible opinions on what they are learning. Behaviour is good and nearly all pupils are courteous and respond respectfully to adults and peers.

Attendance rates compare favourably with those of similar schools. Punctuality when arriving at school and in lessons is generally good.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils are increasingly active in taking responsibility and making decisions that have a positive effect on their learning. This has not developed fully in all classes in key stage 2.

Through a range of activities at school on extra-curricular experiences, pupils develop a good range of social and life skills.

The eco committee and school council make an appropriate contribution to school life. However, the role of the council has not been established completely in order to take an active part in making decisions.

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

Most teachers provide a wide range of learning experiences that capture pupils' interest across the school. The work is presented through the medium of themes that follow the course of pupils' interests. In the Foundation Phase, the rich and stimulating experiences have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes. However, in key stage 2 the change to a thematic method has not ensured that experiences and skills receive full attention in science and information and communication technology.

A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and visits are arranged for pupils and these enrich their experiences effectively.

A prominent place is given to local culture and to the Welsh dimension in the school's plans. This is a strength. Pupils have a host of opportunities to develop their awareness of their local and national heritage. The themed work on 'Y Ffilltir Sgwâr', 'Glowyr Dyffryn Aman' and T. Llew Jones are notable examples of this.

Work on sustainability is promoted well across the school. As a result of various activities, the school fosters pupils' awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Visits from people from abroad and studies of different religions develop their awareness of global citizenship appropriately.

Teaching: Good

Much of the teaching across the school is good. Where the teaching is good, a successful working relationship exists. A stimulating learning environment is created, with appropriate questioning that enriches learning and challenges pupils. Overall, teachers offer good language models. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, the pace of the lesson is not appropriate, and teachers' expectations are too low, especially in challenging more able pupils.

The objectives and success criteria are shared with pupils regularly. Assessment for learning strategies are integrated into the lessons and are now developing consistently across the school. However, teachers' written comments on pupils' work do not always enable them to improve their work.

The school has thorough assessment systems, and careful tracking of individuals is an effective way of measuring pupils' progress.

Reports to parents give appropriate attention to their children's progress and development. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress on two occasions during the school year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy, caring environment that fosters respect and fairness. There are effective arrangements for promoting pupils' health and wellbeing. Through joint worship sessions, the school is providing appropriately for pupils' moral, spiritual and social development. It develops the personal and social education programme carefully, and plays a key part in developing life skills. The school makes effective use of a wide range of external agencies and specialist services, including those provided by the local authority, in order to support pupils with additional learning needs.

The school has appropriate procedures and systems for identifying, supporting and monitoring the progress of pupils with additional learning needs. Every child on the school's special needs register has an appropriate individual education programme, which is reviewed regularly in consultation with parents and pupils. The school is beginning to identify more able and talented pupils, but the provision for them has not been developed fully yet.

The school has good procedures for ensuring attendance.

The school has appropriate procedures and a policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a close, caring and welcoming community and there is a clear feeling of respect and co-operation. The school promotes equal opportunities well, on the whole, and every pupil has opportunities to be a part of sports teams and to attend after-school clubs. However, it has not formalised the opportunities that 'Y Gangen' pupils have to be an inclusive part of all school life.

Pupils and teachers make appropriate use of all of the space and there is creative use of areas in the Foundation Phase, such as the 'Communication Corners'.

The school provides a colourful, stimulating learning environment, which is a way of enriching pupils' learning experiences. Every classroom is attractive and the displays show pupils' current work. The school has a wide range of resources and the recent investment in computer resources has had a positive impact on pupils' investigation and communication skills.

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

Since establishing the school in one new building, a clear vision has been created for the school. The vision has now been shared with all the school's staff, governors, parents and pupils. Through effective co-operation, the school offers an environment that encourages effective learning and fosters a feeling of pride in the school and the community.

The headteacher knows the school well and offers a clear strategic direction. The meetings of the senior management team and staff meetings focus consistently on raising standards and ways of improving provision.

The governing body is very supportive and has established a number of sub-committees to manage the school effectively. Members visit the school to look at specific aspects and co-operate with the curricular teams, presenting reports to the full body. The body receives termly reports from the headteacher, and governors are aware, in general, of the areas that need to be developed in the school's curriculum. The governors do not operate in a challenging enough manner as critical friends in relation to the school's performance and pupils' achievements.

The school pays due attention to national and local priorities. A notable example of this is the provision in the Foundation Phase, which offers stimulating experiences and which other schools come to see in order to experience good practice.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's self-evaluation process is based appropriately on staff discussions, examining and updating schemes of work, analysing data and seeking the opinions of pupils, parents and governors. In addition, the school appropriately includes the senior management team in the process of observing lessons. The school's self-evaluation report identifies strengths and some aspects for improvement, which are fed appropriately into the school's development plan. However, the self-evaluation processes have not identified the need to raise standards in reading and writing clearly enough.

The school development plan includes a useful review of the previous plans, and identifies appropriate intentions for improvement. However, there is not a clear enough focus on raising standards and there is not enough use of quantitative targets to facilitate measuring effect.

The curricular groups in the school are effective learning communities that enable the staff to share ideas, knowledge and expertise. In addition, staff benefit from local cluster learning communities. An example of this is the work done on standardisation and moderation at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. As a result, very purposeful profiles have been created in order to improve teachers' understanding of pupils' outcomes and levels of work.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a wide range of partnerships with the local community and the family of schools. The arrangements for transition between the school and the local secondary school are effective, and enable older pupils to prepare well for the next stage of their education. This partnership promotes curricular and pastoral links effectively.

The partnership between the school and the community is strong. The school makes good use of community resources and holds various activities and concerts in the

community hall. The nursery school is situated in the school grounds and this partnership is close and effective.

The parent-teacher association is very supportive and contributes effectively to the school's work. Computer resources have been bought recently and are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

A family learning project 'Language and Play, Number and Play' is a good example of a partnership between home and school that develops aspects of co-operation and raising standards.

Resource management: Good

The school has an appropriate level of staff to teach the curriculum effectively. Teachers have good knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum. Assistants are an effective part of the team and have a positive influence on learning and teaching. Performance management systems have been established well at the school. Training is linked clearly to the school's priorities and performance management.

Planning, preparation and assessment periods are used effectively to ensure purposeful planning.

The school has a good range of resources that are used effectively to promote and enrich teaching.

Leaders and managers pay effective attention to managing resources, staff and funding.

The headteacher and the governing body's finance committee review the school's expenditure regularly. There is an appropriate link between the school's expenditure decisions and the priorities of the school development plan.

The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the Foundation Phase the achievements of seven-year-old pupils at the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science (the core subjects) have risen from 74% in 2008 to 89% in 2011. This has placed the school among the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. The school's performance has been higher than the family average in Welsh in two of the last four years and in three of the last four years in science. The school has performed a little below the family average in mathematics in three of the last four years.

Pupils who attained level 3 or higher in science compare favourably with those in other schools in the family and results have been higher than the family and Wales averages for three of the last four years.

In key stage 2, the school's performance in the core subject indicator has increased over the last four years from 71% in 2008 to 86% in 2011. The performance of 11-year-old pupils who reach the expected level in the core subject indicator in comparison with schools that have similar percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased from the bottom 25%-50% to the top 25% over the last five years. Girls have performed better than boys in the core subject indicator in three of the last five years.

However, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 in Welsh, English, mathematics and science has been lower than the averages for the family for three of the last four years.

The performance of pupils at level 5 or higher has not compared favourably with family averages during the last five years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixty-two responses from parents were received.

All agree that:

- the school is run well.

Nearly all agree that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their children like school and are making good progress;
- their child had support to settle at the school;
- teaching is good and staff expect their child to do his/her best;
- their children are encouraged to be healthy and to take physical exercise;
- staff treat all pupils with respect and their child is safe at school;
- the school helps children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility;
- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any appropriate individual needs.
- they feel comfortable about asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem; and
- their child has been prepared well for moving on to the next school.

Most indicate that:

- homework builds on what is learnt at school;
- there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits;
- they have regular information about their child's progress; and
- pupils behave well at school, and they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Ninety-three per cent of parents indicate that behaviour is good, which is a little lower than the national figure of 96% for primary schools in Wales.

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and fifty-eight responses from key stage 2 were received.

All indicate that:

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

Nearly all indicate that:

- they feel safe at school and know to whom to speak if they are worried;
- there are many opportunities at school to take regular physical exercise and the school teaches how to keep healthy;
- they are doing well at school and know what to do and to whom to speak if they find the work difficult;
- homework helps them to understand and improve their work at school; and
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Most indicate that:

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

Many believe that:

- the school deals well with any bullying.

In general, the school's responses are similar to the responses across Wales. Eighty-seven pupils at Ysgol y Bedol are of the opinion that the school deals with any bullying, which is a little lower than the national figure of 92%

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Anwen Griffith	Reporting Inspector
Maldwyn Pryse	Team Inspector
Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Alan Parry	Lay Inspector
Aled Davies	Peer Inspector
Donna Williams	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. FPYear 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.