



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes
Glyn Collen
Pentwyn
Cardiff
CF23 7ES**

Date of inspection: November 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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Publication date: 01/02/2013

Context

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes was opened in September 2009, under the care of Ysgol y Wern, as part of Cardiff Council's strategy for extending provision for Welsh-medium education. The school is located on the site of Ysgol Bryn Celyn, mainly to serve the areas of Pentwyn and Pontprennau. The two schools are currently going through significant development work on the site.

There are 39 children aged 4-8 at the school, and the school will reach its full capacity in 2015. There are 15.4% of children registered as having special educational needs, and approximately 7.7% are entitled to free school meals; these figures are lower than both national and local averages. Ninety-six point seven per cent (96.7%) of children come from predominantly English-speaking homes, and approximately 7% are from an ethnic minority background.

Because the school is relatively new, there is no previous inspection report. As pupils progress to Year 3 for the first time in September this year, a temporary headteacher was appointed to the school.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Pen-y-Groes in 2012-2013 is £9,372. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Cardiff is £12,307 and the minimum is £2,873. Ysgol Pen-y-Groes is in second place out of the 99 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of the school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Pen-y-Groes's current performance is adequate because:

- most pupils make good progress in their lessons and current books;
- pupils throughout the school are well behaved and courteous, and they have a good attitude towards learning; and
- there is effective provision to promote wellbeing and an inclusive and homely ethos, where pupils feel happy and safe.

However:

- there is not enough progress in pupils' extended writing skills in both languages across the curriculum;
- the quality of teaching is adequate; and
- the assessment procedure has not been embedded fully, and marking does not show pupils clearly enough how to improve the quality and content of their work.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the temporary headteacher has a clear vision and high expectations which have been communicated successfully in a short period of time to staff, pupils and governors;
- the temporary headteacher has succeeded in getting to know the school thoroughly in a short period of time;
- there is clear evidence of improvement in important areas in a short period of time; and
- the commitment of all staff to develop the school as an orderly educational community which focuses on raising standards.

However:

- to date, it is too early for the improvements to have had a full impact on standards and provision;
- the self-evaluation system does not do enough in terms of analysing and evaluating the standards, quality and effect of the school's systems and strategies;
- to date, the role of the new governing body as a critical friend to the school has not developed appropriately; and
- the school's leadership is not stable.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise the standards of pupils' extended writing skills in both languages across the curriculum
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching
- R3 Strengthen the procedure for assessment and assessment for learning
- R4 Strengthen the self-evaluation procedure and ensure that stakeholders are involved in the process
- R5 Develop the role of the governing body as a critical friend
- R6 As a matter of urgency, ensure stability in the school's leadership

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils at the school make good progress. Standards of pupils' work in their books and during learning sessions are appropriate to their age and ability, and the best pupils' work is of a good standard.

Throughout the school, most pupils can recall previous learning well, and they use this information purposefully in lessons to acquire new knowledge and skills. In the Foundation Phase, most children make consistent and obvious progress across all learning areas. Their knowledge and understanding are developing well.

Almost all pupils work hard during sessions, and show an interest in classroom activities. They are able to discuss their work intelligently, and by the time they reach the beginning of key stage 2, they show increasing independence whilst working.

Although almost all pupils come from homes where English is spoken as a first language, they communicate confidently verbally in both Welsh and English from an early age.

They are able to talk clearly and enthusiastically about their work, using an increasingly rich vocabulary. Most of them usually choose to speak Welsh with their friends in informal situations, and this is a particular feature of the school.

Pupils develop to be effective readers. Most of them make good progress in their reading skills in both Welsh and English. In the Foundation Phase, most of them enjoy reading simple texts with increasing confidence and accuracy. They use appropriate strategies to read unfamiliar words.

By the time they reach key stage 2, most are able to read fluently, accurately and intelligently in both Welsh and English, using intonation to convey meaning. They are able to discuss the content of books effectively, express their opinion on them, and use their reading skills effectively to acquire information across a range of areas.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils make appropriate progress in their ability to write independently. They use increasing vocabulary and phrases, and are beginning to vary sentences and use punctuation well. In key stage 2, the majority write correctly in both languages in a range of forms. Their punctuation and spelling skills are developing appropriately. However, their ability to write at length in both languages has not been developed well. Few pupils write lengthy pieces of work. The handwriting and presentation of work in their current books are good.

In assessments at the end of Foundation Phase in 2012, every child achieved the expected levels, namely outcome 5 or above, in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematics; about half the cohort achieved outcome 6 in language skills.

Compared to schools with similar levels in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the school was placed in the highest 50%, except for personal and social skills, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

Within the very limited data that is available, it is not possible to see a pattern in the results of boys and girls, pupils who are entitled to free school meals, or pupils from an ethnic background. However, boys performed better on outcome 6 in 2012.

The school's internal tracking records show that almost all pupils' progress is as good as expected, or better.

Pupils with special educational needs show good progress towards achieving their personal targets.

Wellbeing: Good

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

Almost all pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy school life. Most of them enjoy their lessons and voice sensible opinions about what they learn. All pupils get along well with each other, and standards of behaviour are high. They are courteous towards each other, towards teachers and towards visitors. Pupils of all ages play with each other happily during break times and lunchtimes.

Many pupils show maturity and a willingness to help others at the school, and this prepares them well for the next stages in life. They are good ambassadors for the school, and they communicate confidently using a high standard of Welsh.

Pupils show concern for others through contributing towards raising money for charities such as 'Children in Need'.

A School Council was established this year and the members have met in order to elect officers and suggest ideas. The council members are very aware of their responsibilities as representatives of all pupils at the school.

The attendance rate is 94.3% in 2011-2012 and this compares favourably with similar schools. Pupils are aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

Teachers provide a range of interesting experiences inside and outside which engage pupils' interests and respond to the needs of many pupils at the school. Activities meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the national curriculum and religious education.

Teachers plan effectively to develop communication skills in the Foundation Phase, and planning for English language skills in key stage 2 is developing appropriately.

However, planning for developing pupils' extended writing skills in both languages is not good. There is suitable provision for developing numeracy, information and communication technology and thinking skills.

Good attention is given to the Welsh dimension throughout the school, and the school organises various activities in order to ensure that pupils understand and celebrate Welsh culture.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is developing appropriately at the school. It operates in a sustainable manner through reducing waste and recycling.

Teaching: Adequate

Teachers have good knowledge about the learning areas and subjects that they teach. They use various teaching strategies in order to ensure that pupils are given rich learning experiences. They create a rich, attractive and stimulating environment in their classes. Effective co-operation between staff and support staff creates an industrious and supportive ethos. There is a good working relationship between staff and pupils in every class.

In many lessons, there are lively presentations and a purposeful pace. In these lessons, teachers share the lesson aims appropriately with pupils and arrange a sequence of activities which ensure that pupils continue to work productively. They discuss success criteria with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and many pupils have a good awareness of their personal targets. Through effective questioning, teachers challenge pupils to think. Praise and encouragement are used consistently, which helps to control pupils' behaviour effectively.

Teaching is less effective in a few lessons. Not enough differentiated activities are provided in these lessons, and teachers do not encourage pupils to think or develop their understanding and skills thoroughly. The pace of these lessons is also too slow, some pupils are disruptive and not all pupils' needs are met.

Throughout the school, work does not challenge pupils of higher ability in lessons. In general, activities which have been planned for writing do not place enough emphasis on developing extended writing skills effectively.

Assessment for learning strategies have not been developed appropriately across the school. Most teachers include pupils in the process of setting targets for improvement, but this practice is not consistent across the school. Most teachers mark regularly, but this marking is not always detailed enough to ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work. Marking does not always place enough emphasis on the standard of presentation of work. Appropriate arrangements are in place to standardise and moderate teachers' assessments.

Parents receive clear information about their children's achievements through the bi-annual reports and meetings.

Care, support and guidance: Good

All staff share an understanding and responsibility for care, support and guidance, and they are fully committed to ensuring pupils' wellbeing. There are clear and orderly procedures for ensuring that pupils maintain very good standards of behaviour. Learning experiences promote pupils' personal development very well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

There is a clear policy for supporting pupils with additional learning needs, and procedures are effective. Support is well co-ordinated and the school works closely with other agencies to produce suitable support strategies.

The school promotes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and a healthy diet very effectively. There are appropriate policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' health and emotional and physical wellbeing. Pupils show respect for others around them and take pride in contributing to the work of the School Council. Appropriate use is made of external specialist support services, including educational psychologists, the police service and a nurse.

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

Learning environment: Good

There is an inclusive ethos within this young school, which is a happy and welcoming community, with a warm atmosphere amongst staff and pupils. Policies, plans and procedures have been put in place which ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities, and which promote equality and social diversity.

Classrooms are colourful and attractive and there is a variety of displays including pupils' work. There is a pleasant hall which is used effectively for services, as a canteen and for physical education activities. All facilities are clean and suitable, and the site and building are both well maintained.

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

A headteacher was appointed to the school for the first time in September 2012. As a result, the school's management structures have not yet been established fully. A teacher leads work in the Foundation Phase effectively, and subject leaders have been appointed recently. Teachers have provided a suitable development plan which is based on the main priorities, and they work effectively to put the plan into practice, with the support of governors.

The temporary headteacher provides strong leadership to all members of staff in order to create a school community in which pupils feel appreciated, grow in confidence and maturity and are keen to learn.

A suitable performance management system has been established and implemented for all teachers. It has led to performance targets which focus appropriately on personal development and whole-school priorities.

Governors have a strong commitment to the school and a clear vision of Welsh-medium education. They offer strong support to staff and challenge the headteacher rigorously in order to evaluate the extent to which the school is developing in line with their vision.

The governing body is working effectively to ensure that statutory policies are all in place by the end of this year. No rigorous self-evaluation procedures or detailed development plans have been established to date. As a result, the governing body is unable to monitor quality and standards rigorously.

Improving quality: Adequate

In the short period since the appointment of the temporary headteacher, the school has undertaken a self-evaluation which has led to identifying the main priorities for improvement. In general, this process has identified a number of the school's main needs successfully. However, the arrangements that are followed do not give appropriate attention to the views of a range of stakeholders such as parents and pupils. Nor do they give suitable attention to direct evidence of quality monitoring activities such as classroom observations.

The self-evaluation has led to a development plan which includes suitable priorities for teachers and governors to implement in the short term. In general, success criteria are suitable, but those which are relevant to pupils' achievement are not challenging enough. The plan identifies clearly the resources that have been earmarked for the activities, and all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to their implementation.

The school arranges a beneficial programme which gives teachers regular opportunities to visit other Welsh-medium schools in order to see good examples of teaching and assessment. However, no opportunities have been provided to date to be part of networks of professional practice outside the school. Internal networks provide suitable opportunities for teachers to consider their own practice, including completing evaluations of their lessons.

Partnership working: Adequate

The school has some useful partnerships. Teachers share the planning of tasks with teachers in other new Welsh-medium schools. Pupils benefit from the good relationship that exists with the secondary school to which they are likely to transfer. Links with the local library, the police and other agencies offer pupils interesting experiences.

Parents support the school effectively, by extending the school's work to the home. A high percentage of parents attend parents' evenings, and the school has benefited significantly from financial contributions from the parent teacher association.

Resource management: Adequate

Leaders manage the school's financial resources well and ensure that they conform fully with the new development plan. The budget is monitored carefully.

The school has enough qualified and experienced teachers, and they are deployed suitably. Staff are offered good opportunities to attend appropriate training courses, for example, to develop their role as subject co-ordinators and for developing standards of literacy and numeracy.

Provision for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is well organised. Teachers use these opportunities effectively.

On the whole, the school has a good range of appropriate resources. Considering the school's outcomes, it provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The only performance data available is that for the Foundation Phase, and only for 2012. As the cohorts are very small, with one pupil corresponding to 10% of the cohort, it is not possible to form a meaningful judgement on the basis of this data.

In assessments at the end of Foundation Phase in 2012, every child achieved the expected levels, namely outcome 5 (level 2) or better in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematics; about half the cohort achieved outcome 6 (level 3) in language skills.

Compared to schools with similar levels in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the school was placed in the highest 50%, except for personal and social skills, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

Within the very limited data available, it is not possible to find any pattern in the results of boys and girls, pupils who are entitled to free school meals, or pupils from ethnic backgrounds. However, boys performed better in outcome 6 in 2012.

The school's internal tracking records show that almost all pupils' progress is as good as expected, or better.

The interim results for the end of the Foundation Phase for 2013 show that all pupils reach the expected standards in wellbeing and mathematical development, and that many of them attain the same standard in communication skills.

Pupils with special educational needs show good progress towards their personal targets.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

A total of 14 responses were received by parents.

They all agree:

- that the school is well run;
- that they are satisfied with the school;
- that behaviour is good;
- that their children like school and make good progress;
- that the homework builds well on what is learnt at school;
- that their child was supported to settle at the school;
- that teaching is good and that staff expect children to work hard and do their best;
- that their children are encouraged to be healthy and undertake physical exercise;
- that staff treat all children with respect and that their child is safe at school;
- that the school helps children to become more mature and take responsibility;
- that their child is given appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs;
- that they feel comfortable about approaching the school to ask questions, make suggestions or identify a problem; and
- that their child has been prepared well to move on to the next school.

Most of them indicate:

- that there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits; and
- that they receive regular information about their child's progress.

Thirty-three per cent of parents indicate that they do not understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints, which is well below the national figure of 90% for primary schools in Wales.

Responses to learner questionnaires

There is no commentary on the pupil questionnaire as no responses were received before the collection date.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Garth Higginbotham	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Sian Hart	Peer Inspector
Anne Fenner	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 is seen on our website along with 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