



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 Bro Brynach
Whitland
Carmarthen
SA34 0EL**

Date of inspection: February 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 Bro Brynach is located in the centre of the village of Llanboidy near Whitland in Carmarthenshire. The school's area is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Only a very few pupils receive free school meals and the percentage is much lower than the national and local averages.

Pupils receive most of their education through the medium of Welsh. There are 93 pupils between 3 and 11 years of age on roll and many have received pre-school education.

The school admits pupils from across the ability range. Approximately 19% of pupils have additional learning needs. This is below the national and local averages.

English is the main language of the home for most pupils. The main aim of the school's language policy is to ensure that pupils are bilingual before transferring to the secondary school.

The school was last inspected in February 2006. The current headteacher was appointed in 2004.

The individual school budget per pupil in 2010-2011 for Ysgol Bro Brynach is £3,771, in comparison with a maximum of £18,947 and a minimum of £3,114 for primary schools in Carmarthenshire. The school has the 36th highest budget per pupil of the 110 primary schools in Carmarthenshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

This school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress during their time at the school;
- pupils' standards of wellbeing are robust and this contributes well to their social and life skills;
- good experiences are provided;
- most of the teaching is good across the school; and
- there is a caring ethos that ensures that nearly all pupils enjoy learning and feel safe.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the head teacher knows the school well and provides sincere, thoughtful and purposeful leadership;
- self-evaluation is effective and identifies strengths and weaknesses accurately;
- the strategic and developmental planning focuses specifically on raising standards; and
- the school's governors are very supportive of the school's work and fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 provide regular opportunities for developing writing in English across the curriculum in the lowest years of key stage 2;
- R2 ensure that the good practice in assessment for learning and marking is developed consistently across the school; and
- R3 consider pupils' opinions on the school's life and work more regularly when planning for improvement.

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

Most pupils' basic skills on entry to the school are satisfactory or better in comparison with the expected average. Nearly all attain the appropriate outcomes for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage.

It is important to treat teachers' assessment results with care because of the small number of pupils in each cohort. Since 2007, pupils' achievements in both key stages are higher than family, local authority and Wales averages in the core subjects (namely Welsh, mathematics and science in key stage 1 and English in addition in key stage 2). The situation is the same when the subjects are combined. There is consistent improvement recently in the school's results at higher levels than expected and the percentages are often higher than the average for the family of schools. There has been no significant difference between boys' and girls' performance since 2007. Nearly all pupils across the school complete their work consistently and show good progress in the standard of that which is achieved in lessons and over a period of time. There is obvious progress in Welsh by monoglot English latecomers.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively during lessons. Most pupils can converse confidently and in a polished way in both languages. At the top end of the school, most can respond sensibly to the viewpoints of others and offer their own valid contributions.

Nearly all pupils' reading standards in both languages are good. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are reading a wide range of materials fluently across the curriculum. They understand what they are reading and almost all can choose specific parts of books effectively for their own use within their work. Many pupils can look for and collate information confidently from a range of sources, using Welsh and English side by side naturally and effectively.

In Years 3 and 4, many pupils' development in writing English is appropriate. Although their writing skills across the curriculum have not been developed sufficiently, by the time they reach the top end of the school pupils' writing skills in both languages are good.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs achieve well and make appropriate progress for their age and ability.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school. They are aware of the importance of eating healthily. They participate regularly in physical exercise activities in school and in after-school clubs. Pupils know how to express an opinion or concern about any case of bullying or misbehaviour. Nearly all state that they are treated with respect, are happy at school and turn confidently to adults for help.

Most pupils' behaviour towards each other, teachers and visitors is consistently good. They show respect towards everyone and this is a particular feature at the school. During the last three years, the school's attendance percentage was around the median when compared with that of similar schools.

Most pupils are extremely proud of their school and have suitable opportunities to express an opinion through their contribution to the School Council and the Eco Council. They contribute extensively to the school's charity work and they have frequent opportunities to take part in social events in the community. This develops their social and life skills effectively.

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

The curriculum complies with the statutory requirements of the Foundation Phase, Curriculum 2008 and religious education. The school provides a good range of learning experiences for pupils.

In most lessons, teachers plan a good range of activities. A good feature is the flexibility of the arrangements in the Nursery and Reception classes, which ensures regular opportunities for children to make decisions and choices about their learning. This develops their independence and their self-confidence well.

The provision for developing pupils' communication, reading and writing skills is good and has an obvious influence on raising the standards of all pupil cohorts in school. As a result, pupils can take full advantage of the wider curriculum. However, the provision for using writing skills in English across the curriculum in Years 3 and 4 is judged as adequate.

Teachers provide suitable experiences that meet pupils' needs well in most lessons. The rich provision for the Welsh dimension enables pupils to make good progress. There is good provision to enable pupils to learn about sustainability and global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is generally good in most lessons. Teachers use an appropriate range of methods and strategies and pupils are motivated to make good progress. Teachers and assistants have a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs and interests and this has a positive impact on the standard of teaching.

Teachers have high expectations and, almost without exception, appropriate opportunities are given for developing pupils into independent learners.

Where teaching is good, appropriate and effective use is seen of success criteria and probing questions in order to move the learning forward. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of the lesson is not fast enough and opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning skills are lost.

The school has effective systems for assessing pupils' progress. Beneficial use is made of standard tests and teachers' assessments to set suitable targets for pupils. By the end of key stage 2, pupils use their targets confidently to improve standards. The valuable work that has been undertaken with nearby schools to produce a portfolio to standardise work in Welsh influences the good planning in the subject.

Teachers' sensitive oral feedback enables pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve. Marking pupils' work is less consistent and in some cases it does not always show clearly the way forward to improve their work. In the classes that have best practice, teachers' marking is effective and supportive, leading to advice that offers the next steps for short-term improvement.

The process of Assessment for Learning is developing appropriately throughout the school, and the majority of teachers share learning objectives and use success criteria with pupils. By the end of key stage 2, the school has a procedure of including pupils to be part of the evaluation process and to set success criteria for themselves and for lessons. This has a positive effect on pupils' commitment and on standards in general. However, this good practice is not seen consistently enough in every class.

Reports to parents are detailed and give a clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress, and outline the way forward.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes and supports pupils' health and wellbeing well. This is promoted effectively by personal and social education plans. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully. National initiatives such as those on inclusion and equality are encouraged and supported well. The school works effectively with a number of external agencies, including the medical and emergency services, to safeguard, support and care for pupils. The provider has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Good information is provided to pupils and parents on school life and there are good arrangements for the induction of new pupils.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Effective use is made of standard and diagnostic tests to identify pupils who have needs or those who are more able and talented. Individual syllabuses are reviewed regularly in order to identify progress and note the next steps in learning. Comprehensive use is made of a range of strategies with specific groups. There is good support from assistants in the classes. The school works skilfully with relevant agencies in order to respond to pupils' additional learning needs. The school's reporting procedures on additional learning needs meet the statutory requirements fully.

Learning environment: Good

A friendly, active and inclusive ethos, based on positive support and relationships, is one of the school's strengths. Equal opportunities issues, and issues regarding diversity and equality, are dealt with effectively in school life. The robust arrangements that exist ensure good behaviour across the school. The school succeeds in creating a feeling of unity and purpose.

The curriculum is accessible to all, and the school fulfils its statutory duties successfully.

The school's site and building are stimulating, colourful and attractive. There is extensive use of displays to stimulate learning. The school makes good use of the space available inside and outside the building. The toilets are clean and suitable and the whole site and building are maintained to a high standard.

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

The headteacher knows the school well and provides sincere, thoughtful and purposeful leadership. This ensures that the school has a clear sense of direction and a culture that strives for improvement. Induction arrangements for new members of staff are very effective and ensure valuable support for staff and supply teachers. Roles and responsibilities are defined clearly and they match the school's requirements well. Staff meetings focus very clearly on improvement plans. Performance management arrangements for the teaching staff have been established effectively. However, so far, the system is not in operation for support staff.

Improvement objectives match whole-school improvement plans and individual development needs well. The school's governors are very supportive of the school's work and are fully aware of their responsibilities. The governors won a bronze award under the auspices of Governors Wales in 2011 for their support to the school. The governors get a concise and clear analysis of the school's performance data from the headteacher, and they are well informed about the main issues that face the school.

The school targets national and local priorities well and this has a positive impact on pupils' standards and the school's provision. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Standard Mark, and has won four leaves from the Healthy Schools scheme.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation report is of good quality and identifies clearly the areas to be developed in the school. The school has effective and thorough arrangements that have been established for a number of years, including data analysis, evaluating the provision and scrutinising pupils' work. All of the staff are aware of the purpose and effect of efficient self-evaluation and the governors are part of the process in challenging the school as critical friends. The school encourages pupils to express their opinions orally through the School Council and the Eco Council. However, the school does not listen to pupils' opinions consistently enough when planning for improvement.

The school improvement plan identifies specific and appropriate priorities for development. The plan has been costed and includes realistic timetables and success criteria to help to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives.

The school has an appropriate system of performance management that offers good opportunities for continuous professional development. The staff have been included in a range of training and development opportunities that include working in partnerships with schools and other partners in the wider community.

Good use is made of recommendations by the local authority following monitoring visits. Each recommendation that arose from the last inspection in 2006 has been implemented successfully.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents and the community are good. Partnerships with visitors and volunteers are very effective and have a positive impact on pupils' awareness of their community. Links with local businesses are developing effectively and this has a positive impact on the quality of the educational provision and the standards achieved. Transition plans between the school and the secondary schools prepare older pupils appropriately for the next period in their education.

The school works effectively with nearby schools on appropriate and useful projects in order to ensure consistency in the process of moderating pupils' work and planning for the future. A successful breakfast club and after-school clubs support the school's work on a daily basis.

Visits to the community and visitors from the community make positive contributions towards enriching pupils' experiences. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is developed well through studies and links with other countries. The school supports national and international charities and this raises children's awareness of other people's needs very effectively.

Resource management: Good

The school is appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum effectively. Good use is made of staff time, experience and expertise and co-operation between teachers and support staff is very good. There are effective arrangements in place to identify staff's development needs and appropriate use is made of preparation, planning and assessment time.

The school has a wide range of learning resources of very good quality. In general, financial management is good and relevant decisions are based on improvement needs. Considering its outcomes, the school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Information on teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in key stage 1 and at the end of Year 6 in key stage 2 needs to be treated carefully. Small numbers of children in a year can have a considerable effect on the school's performance statistics from one year to the next. Over the last three years, the performance of seven-year-old pupils at the end of key stage 1 has been good. Results compare consistently well with those of pupils in similar schools in Welsh, mathematics and science. In general, results at the higher level than expected (namely level 3) are good in Welsh, mathematics and science.

In key stage 2, the school's performance is more uneven. The core performance indicator (results for Welsh or English, science and mathematics in combination) has varied from the upper 50% of performance levels for similar schools to the bottom 25% over the last three years. Pupils' results at 11-years-old at the higher level than expected (namely level 5) have been higher than the national average and that for corresponding schools in Welsh and English, but lower in mathematics and science.

In general, over time, there is no obvious pattern of difference between boys' and girls' performance or in the individual subjects in both key stages. In addition, there are no obvious differences in the results at the end of key stages 1 and 2 for specific groups of pupils, such as pupils that are entitled to free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs. These pupils, on the whole, attain levels according to their ability.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eighteen responses were received. All state that their children are safe at school, have had support to settle in well and have been encouraged to be healthy and take regular physical exercise. All are of the opinion that the school helps children to become more mature and shoulder responsibility and that they behave well at school.

All parents are of the opinion that teaching is good, that they receive regular information on their children's progress and that they are satisfied with the progress made by their children.

All state that the school offers a good variety of activities for pupils. They believe that staff treat all children fairly and with respect and offer additional support as needed.

Many also understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints and feel comfortable about asking the school a question. All believe that the school is well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Forty-two learners completed the questionnaire. All learners feel safe at school.

Many state that the school teaches them to stay healthy and that there are many opportunities to take regular physical exercise.

Many state that they are doing well at school. They say that teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress. They also know to whom to speak if they find the work difficult and feel that they have sufficient resources for their work.

A few note that behaviour is not good within the school and that misbehaviour affects their ability to work.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Carolyn Jane Thomas	Reporting Inspector
David Kenneth Davies	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Llyr Jones	Peer Inspector
Ceirios Jenner	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.