



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

**Bryngwyn School
Dafen
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 8RP**

Date of inspection: January 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

Bryngwyn School is an 11-16, mixed, community school, maintained by Carmarthenshire local authority. It is situated in Dafen, on the north-eastern side of Llanelli, and draws its pupils from parts of the town centre and from a number of outlying villages. There are 891 pupils on roll, compared with 967 at the time of the last inspection in March 2006.

The school caters for the full ability range. Four per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is higher than the national average of 2.6%. A further 29% of pupils have special educational needs but no statement. This figure is also higher than the national average of 17.6%. The predominant language of the pupils is English and 4% of the school's population consists of minority ethnic pupils. Nine pupils are looked after by the local authority.

Twenty-nine-point-four per cent of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 19.3%. This figure is slightly higher than the national average of 17.4%.

Membership of the senior leadership team has changed considerably since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010 and the deputy headteacher took up his post in January 2011. The senior leadership team also includes an assistant headteacher and four directors of learning.

The individual school budget per pupil for Bryngwyn School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4,346 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the secondary schools in Carmarthenshire is £7,322 and the minimum is £4,096. Bryngwyn School is sixth out of 14 secondary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Bryngwyn School is an excellent school because:

- pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards;
- the quality of teaching is consistently high and has a considerable impact on developing pupils' skills and raising standards;
- the school provides a wide range of learning experiences that effectively meet the needs of pupils across the ability range;
- partnership working, in particular that with parents or carers and primary schools, is very strong and impacts positively on pupils' progress and achievements; and
- the quality of care, support and guidance, in particular the support for pupils with additional learning needs, is outstanding.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- the leadership provided by the headteacher and the senior leadership team is outstanding;
- there is a strong culture of accountability and a high level of dialogue, interaction and teamwork between teachers, middle managers and senior staff;
- performance management arrangements are very effective;
- the school has a very strong track record in securing improvement and has made very good progress against the recommendations from the last inspection; and
- the school systematically collects the views of stakeholders and this information is used skilfully to improve provision and assess progress over time.

Recommendations

The staff and governors of Bryngwyn School need to:

- R1 make sure that all pupils follow up on missing or incomplete work;
- R2 ensure that there is a high challenge and suitable pace in all lessons;
- R3 eliminate the variation in the quality of the written feedback teachers give to pupils;
- R4 improve communication between the school council and the wider pupil body;
and
- R5 strengthen the arrangements for tutor periods so that they are all of a consistently high quality.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

In key stage 3, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science in combination is above the average for the family of schools and places the school in the top 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals. In English, mathematics and science the proportion of pupils who achieve at level 6 and level 7 or above is also well above the average for the family of schools.

In most indicators, achievement at key stage 4 is higher than that of the family of schools and is well above expectations. There has been a continuing trend of improvement in achievement over the last four years, although performance in 2011 dipped slightly. Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has been consistently well above the average for the family of schools and for similar schools in terms of free-school-meal benchmarks. Achievement in A* and A grades at GCSE is also high. These are outstanding features.

Pupils make outstanding progress between key stage 2 and key stage 4.

In key stage 3, the difference in the performances of boys and girls is generally smaller than the gap in Wales and the family. At key stage 4, in the majority of indicators, the differences in performance are about the same as those of the family and lower than the Wales average. Pupils who are entitled to free school meals perform very well across a range of indicators.

Over the last two years, no pupil has failed to achieve a recognised qualification. After Year 11, most pupils continue in full-time education and proportions are close to local and national averages.

Pupils progress well in nearly all lessons in developing their knowledge and understanding and in acquiring a broad range of skills. Nearly all pupils listen well to each other and most work very efficiently in small groups and pairs. Many pupils are confident contributors to class discussions and debates, and the majority provide extended oral responses. Pupils are confident readers who read a range of texts with expression. They identify patterns and make inferences effectively. The majority can synthesise information and present conclusions. Across a wide range of subjects, many pupils produce extended pieces of writing or re-draft their work following feedback from teachers. They write for a range of purposes and audiences, making good use of subject-specific terminology. During lessons, many pupils across the ability range develop their thinking skills well.

Most pupils take pride with the presentation of their work, although a few pupils do not follow up missing or incomplete work, even when this has been highlighted by the teacher.

At key stage 3, pupils who have the greatest difficulty with reading and numeracy make very good progress following a range of intervention programmes. In 2011, almost all pupils gained an Essential Skills Wales qualification, with over a third of Year 11 pupils gaining a qualification at level 3.

In Welsh second language at key stage 3, results have remained fairly stable and are close to those of similar schools. At key stage 4, it is notable that most pupils take the full course in Welsh second language and, over the last three years, the majority of pupils have achieved a level 2 qualification in Welsh at GCSE. This is significantly better than in similar schools and is an excellent feature.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and most consider that the school deals well with bullying. Nearly all understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise and the majority participate in a wide range of sporting activities, including fly fishing, basketball and gymnastics.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and respectful to their peers and welcoming to visitors. There have been no permanent exclusions since 2009 and the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly over the same period. In lessons, most pupils are well motivated and they show very positive attitudes towards their learning. Nearly all pupils are punctual to lessons and most are punctual to registration periods.

Over the last four years, attendance has improved steadily and is now in the top 50% compared to that of similar schools.

The school council is an enthusiastic forum and it has influenced decisions such as changes to the uniform, canteen and curriculum. However, communication between the school council and the wider pupil body is too inconsistent.

Pupils play a significant role in the local community and nearly all key stage 4 pupils volunteer in the community as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. Older pupils provide counselling to their peers as part of the school's CHAT (Confidentiality, Honesty, Advice and Trust) programme. This, as well as a range of other activities, helps pupils to acquire effectively the social and life skills required for the next stage of their learning.

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

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which fully meets statutory requirements, as well as the needs and aspirations of pupils. There is an extensive range of general and vocational courses at key stage 4 delivered in partnership with the local college and schools. The key stage 3 curriculum builds very well on pupils' experiences at key stage 2. This is supplemented by a wide range of effective transition activities. As a result, pupils settle well into key stage 3 and make very good progress. Bryngwyn 'Ownzone' provides a wide variety of extra-curricular

activities including curriculum support, aromatherapy and skateboarding sessions. In addition there is also a broad range of sporting activities, managed by the 5x60 officer.

The school provides outstanding provision to develop pupils' skills. It monitors and tracks progress carefully and introduces appropriate intervention strategies when pupils need additional support. Nearly all pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 follow courses leading to Essential Skills Wales qualifications at level 1, level 2 and level 3. Pupils use these skills very well in lessons across the curriculum to improve their overall performance. Nearly all pupils in key stage 4 follow the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification and the majority achieve the intermediate qualification.

Provision for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is very strong. Across the school, pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of Welsh culture and history through activities such as the annual eisteddfod as well as visits to Welsh language theatre performances and the Llangrannog camp. The Welsh dimension has a prominent place within the school curriculum.

Very good provision exists for pupils to learn about sustainability and the role they and others play in society and the world. The eco-committee has been effective in raising the awareness of global issues within the school.

Teaching: Excellent

Teaching in the school is very effective and has a significant impact on raising standards of achievement. The high level of consistency in the good or better teaching is a very strong feature of the school.

All teachers have very good subject knowledge and strong working relationships with pupils. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Teachers' planning is skilful and demanding tasks are constructed to challenge and develop pupils' understanding across the ability range. However, in a very few lessons, the lack of challenge and slow pace means that pupils do not make enough progress.

Most teachers develop pupils' skills effectively using a wide range of teaching and learning approaches. These include probing questions, group work and peer and self-assessment. These strategies motivate and stimulate pupils to play an active and full part in the lessons.

Teachers mark books regularly and most provide detailed written feedback on progress and set out clear targets for improvement. However, in a few departments there is too much variation in the quality of the feedback given.

The school tracks effectively pupils' progress at individual, school and subject level, and thoroughly analyses the information to identify areas of improvement. This has had a considerable impact on raising and maintaining high standards. Data is used effectively to reward pupils who are making particularly good progress and to identify and challenge underachievement. Reports to parents are clear and informative and most parents feel that they are well informed about their child's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Extensive partnerships with a range of external organisations provide excellent support for vulnerable learners. This targeted support for groups of pupils and individuals has resulted in significant improvement in pupils' attitude, behaviour and attendance. The rewards and sanctions system is effective in engaging pupils of all ages, with very positive outcomes. The school effectively encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. The extensive and innovative range of extra-curricular activities, with high levels of participation, makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' cultural and social development.

The school's personal and social education programme is effective. Outside agencies are used appropriately to enhance the delivery of the programme. Assemblies and registration periods make a sound contribution to the spiritual and moral ethos of the school and provide appropriate opportunities for reflection. However, the focus and quality of tutor periods are too variable.

The school provides very good quality information, impartial advice and guidance about choices at each key stage.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is exceptional. There is a cohesive, well-co-ordinated framework that enables pupils with learning needs to integrate well into school life and achieve very good outcomes. For example, nurture groups and a translator, jointly appointed with 14-19 network partners to support pupils for whom English is an additional language, provide very good support. Individual education plans are comprehensive. They set out suitable targets and are monitored and reviewed regularly. Parents are kept well informed and are fully involved with their child's education and progress.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a highly inclusive community with an ethos that ensures everyone has equality of access to all aspects of school life. Nearly all pupils feel that staff respect them and their backgrounds and help them to develop an empathy with those from other cultures. Arrangements for pupils with physical disabilities are very good.

The buildings and grounds are well maintained and almost free of graffiti and litter, reflecting the respect shown by pupils to their school. Recent interior refurbishment, including the toilets, has greatly improved the quality of the learning environment for pupils. However, the physical education changing rooms and sport hall accommodation remain areas for improvement. With the exception of these areas, the accommodation and learning resources, especially those for information and communication technology, meet the needs of pupils very well. Together they create a stimulating learning environment, encouraging pupils to achieve their full potential.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Excellent

Leadership: Excellent

The leadership provided by the headteacher and the senior leadership team is outstanding. They share a clear strategic vision for the school that they communicate very well to staff. Together, they have created a very well-managed school where standards and the quality of teaching are consistently high. They have driven forward many innovative developments, which have extended the range and quality of learning experiences for pupils and significantly improved the performance of pupils over recent years.

Leadership and management roles are distributed well and staff undertake their roles very effectively. Priorities from senior leaders drive agendas for middle management meetings. As a consequence, staff at all levels have a very good understanding of whole-school priorities and how they can contribute to them. The level of dialogue, interaction and teamwork between teachers, middle leaders and senior staff is very high.

The quality of performance management is excellent. Teachers have fortnightly meetings with line managers and these are timetabled within the school day. Teachers receive clear targets relating to pupils' predicted performance in classes and departments. Heads of pupil progress (responsible for a year group) also receive appropriately challenging targets, relating to the wellbeing and progress of specific groups of pupils within their year groups. Overall, there is a robust culture of accountability within a collegiate and supportive ethos.

Governors take a very active part in monitoring the performance of the school. They undertake regular monitoring of departments, which includes a review of performance data, discussions with pupils and visits to classes. Governors then present detailed reports on their findings to the full governing body. The governing body challenges the school very well, especially in relation to curricular developments and the standards achieved by pupils.

The school takes very good account of local and national priorities, for example in its work on Welsh language development, improving literacy skills, partnership working, tackling social disadvantage and addressing the underachievement of boys.

Improving quality: Excellent

The school has extensive, rigorous and effective self-evaluation procedures, which provide leaders with a very clear and accurate understanding of its strengths and areas requiring improvement. This well organised process has had a significant impact on improving quality and standards. For example, since the previous inspection there has been a considerable improvement in pupils' performance at key stage 4 and in the reduction of unauthorised absences.

At all levels, staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating standards and setting priorities to bring about improvements. Senior and subject leaders draw effectively from a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate

departments. Staff also analyse performance data rigorously and use this well to identify and address any underperformance. The school systematically collects the views of pupils, parents, carers and other stakeholders and uses the information to improve its provision. The outcomes of all self-evaluation activities are recorded in full and accurate school and subject self-evaluation reports.

The school and subject improvement plans are based securely on the findings from self-evaluation activities. The plans include specific priorities and challenging targets for improvement.

Staff have access to a wide range of professional development activities, which are linked to performance management targets. All teachers are involved in a range of working groups within the school, including those that are matching the quality of teaching to pupil outcomes. All these groups have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and standards.

The school has well-developed links with groups outside the school, including with partner primary schools, other secondary schools in their family and members of the local 14-19 network.

Partnership working: Excellent

The school works very well with all its strategic partners and this has a significantly positive impact on pupil standards and wellbeing, and is particularly successful for those pupils who are most vulnerable.

The school plays an active role in joint-governance arrangements with the further education college and other secondary schools in the local authority. There are robust joint quality assurance arrangements between all providers within the 14-19 partnership. The school pools resources with other providers well to achieve economies of scale and efficiencies.

The school's relationship with parents is very strong. The school uses a wide range of methods to engage with parents, including a digital prospectus available on the internet and an application downloadable from the web with school-based news and announcements. This very active engagement with parents has had a significant impact on improving attendance at parents' evenings as well as reducing the number of unauthorised absences.

Resource management: Excellent

The school manages and deploys staff and financial resources very effectively. The school is appropriately staffed to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Staff are well qualified and the school deploys them effectively.

The school has well-developed procedures for costing and planning for future projects. Funding is appropriately allocated to the priorities in the school and subject development plans. The headteacher, school business manager and governors monitor the budget closely. In view of the high standards pupils achieve, the school provides excellent value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In key stage 3, over the past four years, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) has increased steadily. Since 2008, performance has been higher than the average for the family of schools and, with the exception of 2009, was amongst the highest 25% in comparison with that of similar schools nationally in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Over the past four years, performance in English and mathematics in key stage 3 has been consistently higher than the average for the family and in the higher 50% in comparison with the results of similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. Performance in science has been more variable but is close to that of similar schools. Over the past four years, performance in the core subjects at level 6 or above has been significantly better than that of similar schools. Pupils' progress from the previous key stage was excellent.

In key stage 4, since 2008, the results of the level 2 threshold (which equates to gaining five or A*-C grades at GCSE) including English and mathematics, have been significantly higher than average for the family of schools and amongst the highest 25% in comparison with the results of similar schools. The school's performance in this indicator has been amongst the highest in the family of schools for the last three years. Since 2009, the proportion of pupils attaining the level 2 threshold has been higher than the family and Wales averages and, with the exception of 2011, has placed the school amongst the top 25% of similar schools. Since 2009, the results of the core subject indicator have been higher than the average figures for Wales and the family of schools and place the school in the higher 50% in comparison with similar schools. During the same period, the results for the level 1 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G) have improved and the school is now amongst the top 50% of similar schools. Since 2010, the capped points score has been amongst the highest in the family of schools and places the school in the top 50% of similar schools. The average wider points score is significantly higher than the average for the family of schools.

Over the past two years, no pupil has left the school without having gained at least one recognised qualification. After Year 11 most pupils continue in education, training or employment.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 225 pupils selected at random from across the age range.

Nearly all pupils indicate that they feel safe in school and that there is someone to talk to if they are worried. Most pupils feel that the school deals well with any bullying. Most say that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that there are plenty of opportunities for them to get regular exercise. The proportion believing that the school teaches them how to be healthy is significantly higher than the proportion saying this in other secondary schools. Most pupils believe that they are doing well in school. Nearly all pupils report that teachers help them to learn and make progress and that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to take on responsibility. Nearly all feel that they have enough books and equipment to do their work and many say that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. The proportion believing that homework helps them to understand and improve their work is higher than the proportion saying this in other secondary schools.

Nearly all pupils say that the school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds and most feel that staff respect them and their background and treat all pupils fairly and with respect. These figures are higher than the proportion saying this in other secondary schools. Many pupils feel that pupils behave well and that they can get their work done. Most pupils believe that the school listens to their views and makes the changes they suggest. Again, the proportion saying this is significantly higher than the proportion saying this in other secondary schools. Most pupils report that they were given good advice for choosing courses and that the school helps them to be ready for college or their working life.

Responses to parent and carer questionnaires

One hundred and fourteen parent or carer questionnaires were completed and, overall, parents expressed very positive views about the school.

Nearly all parents are satisfied with the school and say that their child likes school. Nearly all parents say that their child is making good progress and was helped to settle in when they started school. All parents consider that their child is safe in school. Nearly all think that the school is well run and that teaching is good, and all believe that staff expect their child to work hard and do his or her best.

Nearly all feel that their child is encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise and most consider that their child is encouraged to become more mature and take on responsibility. Most consider that there is a good range of activities. Nearly all agree that the school's homework builds well on school work, that pupils behave well in school and that staff treat all children fairly and with respect. Most think that their

child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs and many consider that their child is prepared well for the next stage of learning or employment. Most parents feel that the school keeps them well informed about their child's progress. The proportion of parents saying this is higher than the proportion saying this in other secondary schools. Nearly all are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem and most feel that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Catherine Evans	Reporting Inspector
Denise Wade	Team Inspector
Sue Morgan	Team Inspector
Barry Norris	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Sandra Joy	Peer Inspector
Wendy 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)

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.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

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

Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Families of schools	These 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.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics.
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at the age of 16 or at the age of 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the age of 16.
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.