



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

**YG Cynwyl Elfed
Stryd y Meddyg
Cynwyl Elfed
Carmarthen
SA33 6TR**

Date of inspection: July 2011

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

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

© Crown Copyright 2011: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Context

Cynwyl Elfed is a rural school located in the centre of a village some five miles to the north of the town of Carmarthen and it serves the area around it. At present, 59 pupils between 4 and 11 years of age are on the register and they are admitted at the beginning of the term during which they reach their fourth birthday. The number of pupils has increased since the last inspection. Welsh is the everyday language of the activities and the main teaching medium in the School. Thirty-one per cent of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as a first language. In the foundation phase and key stage 1, the school teaches all curriculum subjects through the medium of Welsh, and increasingly introduces English during key stage 2.

The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has decreased significantly over recent years from 13% in 2007 to 1.6% in 2011. Fifteen per cent (15%) of pupils are on the special education needs list. Ten per cent (10%) of key stage 2 pupils have an educational statement.

The current Headteacher has been in post since September 2006. Since January 2011, he has also taken on the duties of acting Headteacher at a nearby school.

The individual school budget per pupil for 2010-2011 for Ysgol Gynradd Cynwyl Elfed is £3,916, in comparison with a maximum of £17,415 and a minimum of £3,014 for primary schools in Carmarthenshire. The school has the 40th highest budget per pupil of the 114 primary schools in Carmarthenshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- nearly all pupils make appropriate progress during their time at the school;
- all pupils are polite and behave very well;
- the school provides a wide range of valuable learning experiences; and
- there is close and effective co-operation between the school, the parents and the local community.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leadership is strong;
- the leaders put clear emphasis and focus on raising standards and improving the provision;
- the school has effective partnerships; and
- the school has made good progress since the last inspection.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

R1 improve the teaching across the school;

R2 ensure consistency in terms of the use of assessment for teaching; and

R3 make wider use of the external area as a learning resource in the Foundation Phase.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. The progress that the school makes in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the local authority which will report its findings to Estyn.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Teachers' assessments at the end of year 2, in key stage 1, and at the end of year 6, in key stage 2, must be treated with care because the small numbers of children in a year can impact significantly on a school's performance from one year to another.

Over the last three years, the performance of seven year old pupils at the end of key stage 1 has been good. The results compare consistently well with similar schools in science and in two out of the three years in Welsh and mathematics. In general, the results are at a higher level than expected (level 3), good in Welsh and mathematics, but lower than the pupils in the family of schools in science.

In key stage two, the school's performance is more uneven. The core subject indicator (Welsh or English, science and mathematics results combined) has varied from the highest 50% of schools to the lowest 25% during the last three years. The pupils' results at 11 years old are at a higher level than expected (level 5) in mathematics and science having been higher than the national average and the schools in the family. The pupils have not done as well in Welsh and their results in English have varied from year to year.

Nearly all pupils make appropriate progress during their time at school. The size of the cohorts is small and the boy/girl ratio varies. As a result, it is not easy to identify specific trends when comparing the performance of boys and girls. The children with additional learning needs achieve appropriately in line with their ability, and their previous attainment.

In key stage 1, the majority of pupils use Welsh with confidence orally in a range of situations. They listen well and contribute enthusiastically to discussions, using complete sentences. They have a good grasp of vocabulary and terms and they make good progress in Welsh reading and writing skills.

In key stage 2, pupils offer verbal comments spontaneously. The quality of verbal expression is good. Many pupils can read aloud meaningfully and with appropriate intonation. The more able readers discuss authors' style and expression intelligently. They also express preferences for specific authors, giving valid reasons. Pupils who do not have a previous grasp of Welsh make good progress in their ability to use the language. In general, many of the pupils write well and the more able pupils achieve work of very good quality.

Wellbeing: Good

The pupils are aware of the need to eat healthily and the advantages of doing so. They grow plants and vegetables in the school garden and develop their understanding of the importance of conservation and their responsibility to look after their environment.

The pupils' behaviour is very good; they enjoy being at school and are keen to learn. The good relationship amongst themselves and with adults contributes effectively to the quality of their work. All the children feel safe at the school and know how to get support if they are not happy.

School Council meetings are held regularly and the pupils respond well to the opportunities to make decisions. This makes a positive difference to the quality of life at school. During the last three years, the attendance rate has been over 95% and this places the school in the highest 25% in comparison with similar schools. However, the attendance rate has fallen this year because of illness that affected a significant percentage of pupils. Punctuality is good.

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Key Question 2: How good is provision? | Good |
|---|-------------|

Learning experiences: Good

The teachers provide a range of learning experiences that, on the whole, meet the pupils' needs, including those of pupils who have additional learning needs. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school's plans for extending the Foundation Phase are developing appropriately, including making more use of the external area for appropriate learning experiences. The range of visitors, and the visits organised for the pupils, support and enrich their experiences effectively.

On the whole, the detailed planning develops good progression and development in communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

Provision for the Welsh language is good and succeeds in laying firm foundations for developing pupils' language skills. The Welsh dimension is a strong feature of the life and work of the school. The provision promotes the pupils' recognition and understanding of their local area and of Wales as a country and nation. All the staff offer language models that promote the development of literacy effectively.

Provision for sustainable development education is appropriate. The school ensures that the pupils get good opportunities to extend their knowledge of issues concerning global citizenship through the curriculum and cultural and charitable activities.

Teaching: Adequate

The teachers have good subject knowledge and appropriate learning areas. In general, they use a wide range of suitable resources effectively in order to promote pupils' experiences. The relationship between teachers, classroom assistants and pupils is excellent. On the whole, teachers successfully present a curriculum that is based on children's experiences. However, in a minority of the lessons observed, the expectations were not high enough and as a result a minority of more able pupils underachieved.

Although there were examples of very effective differentiation in the majority of the lessons, at times, the teaching strategy or learning activities do not sufficiently consider the age and ability range.

In general, the school's procedures for marking and providing verbal and written feedback for pupils provides sufficient support to enable pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work. Improvement targets are set for individual pupils which are specifically to enable pupils to measure their progress over time. However, the procedures are not operating consistently in all classes. The school's system for reaching an opinion on attainment levels at the end of key stages is good and the arrangements for moderating teachers' assessments with nearby schools are effective.

The quality of the reports to parents and carers on their children's progress is good.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective arrangements exist to support pupils' health and welfare. Appropriate risk assessments are completed for relevant aspects of the school's work and any absences about which the school is not aware of the reason are responded to on the first day. Learning experiences promote pupils' personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils contribute well within their local community through activities such as services, supporting eisteddfodau and visits.

The school has an appropriate child protection policy and suitable procedures for safeguarding.

The school identifies pupils with additional learning needs early through staff discussions. A close link is maintained with parents in setting and evaluating improvement targets in the individual educational plans and guidance is shared with them as to how they can support their child. The teaching assistants provide effective support that meets pupils' additional needs well.

Learning environment: Good

The school promotes an inclusive ethos and the appropriate range of policies and procedures are in place to promote equality and equal rights to the curriculum. Pupils' background is considered and procedures to prevent aggressive behaviour, such as bullying, are very effective. Through working with members of the local community and different educational experiences inside and outside the school, the children have a clear understanding of issues concerning equality.

Effective use is made of the school's internal space and the learning areas are stimulating and colourful. Pupils' work is honoured through appropriate displays that celebrate successes and progress.

The staff make appropriate use of the resources that suit pupils' learning needs well. For example, the school has a good supply of information technology equipment which is used effectively to improve the provision and to raise standards in the area.

However, the external area is not used at all appropriate times to its full potential in order to extend the youngest pupils' learning experiences.

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

Leadership: Good

The school's aims and values are appropriate and are promoted by all staff. The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction for improvement. Through his effective leadership, staff work successfully as a team and respond appropriately to their leadership roles. Staff roles and responsibilities are clear and the school has an effective system for performance management. As a result, the leaders respond well to the needs of improving the whole school, in addition to providing appropriately for the staff's professional development.

The governing body is developing a good understanding of the school's performance. It supports the school well through monitoring visits which have a specific focus. Its role as a critical friend is developing appropriately.

School initiatives to meet local and national priorities are developing well. A high priority is given to developing pupils' welfare and learning in the Foundation Phase. The school succeeds well in satisfying the principles of the Welsh Government's policy for *Iaith Pawb*, through developing pupils' bilingual skills in Welsh and English. By the age of eleven, pupils have good bilingual skills. The school also responds effectively to aspects of the Schools Effectiveness Framework. The headteacher is taking temporary responsibility for the leadership of a small school nearby and the staff in both schools work together effectively.

Improving quality: Good

School self-evaluation is developing well. The staff use a comprehensive range of evidence as part of the process. Monitoring work in the classrooms and in the involvement of pupils, parents and the community in self-evaluation has enabled the school to make an appropriate assessment of its strengths and areas to be improved.

Good use is made of analysing teacher assessment data to decide how well the school is performing in comparison with similar schools within the family, other schools and local and national averages.

The school development plan is effective in addressing areas that need to be improved and it has allocated appropriate resources for the process.

The school operates as a strong learning community. For example, teachers in the cluster schools work together to create schemes of work following the revision of the National Curriculum in 2008. Recently, the school has identified the need to raise the pupils' literacy standards. As a result, the school works with other schools on appropriate strategies to improve the provision. There is an effective culture of collaboration within the school. There is also effective strategic collaboration and sharing of expertise and resources between the school and the nearby school that is under the care and leadership of the headteacher of Cynwyl Elfed.

Partnership working: Good

There is a strong partnership with parents and the local community. They are very supportive of the school and contribute towards a number of activities, including raising money to improve the educational provision. The school shares its resources, including use of the external learning area, with the village's cylch meithrin. This is effective use of the school's resources and it prepares the children in the nursery well for starting the next period in their education. An appropriate range of external agencies and organisations, such as health and social services and community organisations, contribute their expertise well to support the school's work when necessary.

The school has a good strategic partnership with the schools in the catchment area and with the local secondary schools. These arrangements are effective, for example, for standardising and moderating teachers' assessments at the end of a key stage and for improving the provision and raising pupils' standards further. In addition, the school has an appropriate partnership with the two secondary schools that the pupils transfer to at eleven years of age. These arrangements are effective for preparing the pupils for the next stage of their education.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its finances well. There is an appropriate range of learning and teaching resources available. There are sufficient experienced staff, including classroom assistants with appropriate qualifications, available for the number of pupils. Good use is made of the money that is available from a variety of sources. Recently, some of the money was used to further develop the external area in order to provide additional learning opportunities for Foundation Phase pupils. Teachers make effective use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment.

Considering the good use the school makes of its finances and the progress and good and sometimes very good results achieved by most of the pupils according to their ability and their potential, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-two questionnaires were returned by parents and most of them are very satisfied with the school. They say that their children like the school and feel safe there. Everyone believes that the pupils' behaviour is good, that the pupils are respected, treated fairly and that the school develops them into being more mature and to shoulder responsibilities. All parents also feel that the teaching is good and that their children are making appropriate progress at school. All the parents feel comfortable in asking the school a question and in making suggestions or raising a problem. They believe that the school provides a good variety of activities, including trips or visits. All are of the opinion that the school is well run and many think that it is very well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

The learners feel extremely positive about their school. They all say that they feel safe there and think that the school deals well with bullying. They all know to whom they can speak if they are worried or if they find the work difficult. Every one of the learners thinks that the teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. Nearly all feel that other children behave well. A few are of the opinion that the homework does not help them to improve their school work.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Alun Morgan | Reporting Inspector |
| Jeff Jones | Team Inspector |
| Ruth Rhydderch | Lay Inspector |
| Terry Williams | Peer Inspector |
| Aled Davies | 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 Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report. 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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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 | R | Y1 | Y2 | 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:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Key stage 1 | 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 |