



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 Parc y Tywyn
Heol Elfed
Burry Port
Carmarthenshire
SA16 0AL**

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

Ysgol Parc y Tywyn provides Welsh-medium education for pupils aged between three and a half and 11 years of age. The school serves the town of Burry Port and the surrounding area. It is located on the outskirts of the town, in the middle of an estate of council houses near the local secondary school. According to the school it is an area that is developing economically with recent developments in the world of tourism and leisure. Nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure that is significantly lower than the average for Wales and the education authority's average.

At present, there are 247 pupils at the school, including 60 pupils in the reception classes. Twelve and a half per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken; English is the home language of the remainder. Pupils are taught by 11 full-time teachers and five part-time teachers as well as 16 assistants across the school. Nearly all pupils will transfer to Ysgol Gyfun y Strade at the end of their period at the school.

Twenty-four per cent of pupils receive support for additional educational needs, a percentage that is a little higher than the national figure. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. No permanent exclusions have been recorded since the last inspection.

The current headteacher has been in post since September 1996. There has been a considerable change in the school's staff this year when four new teachers started.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Parc y Tywyn in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,321 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in Carmarthenshire's primary schools is £18,947 and the minimum is £3,114. Ysgol Parc y Tywyn is in the 80th place out of the 110 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Elements of the school's current performance are good because:

- most pupils are making good progress in their lessons;
- pupils behave very well, they are courteous, and they have a good attitude towards learning; and
- pupils' health and wellbeing are promoted effectively.

However, the current performance is judged as adequate because:

- trends in teachers' assessment results over time are lower than the results in similar schools;
- there is insufficient progress in pupils' extended writing skills in both languages in key stage 2;
- too many children are underachieving in their reading tests; and
- at times the marking does not show clearly enough how to improve the quality and content of the work.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because:

- the school does not address data analysis in sufficient detail in order to identify underachievement in comparison with that of similar schools;
- the processes for monitoring provision are not sufficiently thorough in order to identify where improvement is needed; and
- the school development plan is not sufficiently challenging to set a clear direction for developing the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise the standards of reading and writing in Welsh and English in key stage 2;
- R2 ensure improvement in the numbers of pupils who achieve at the higher levels at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2;
- R3 strengthen the school's self-evaluation systems with a clear focus on improvement and pupils' literacy skills; and
- R4 make better use of data that compares the school's performance with that of similar schools.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress against the recommendations will be monitored by Estyn.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

There is variation in terms of pupils' ability on entry to the school. However, most pupils are making appropriate progress at school and, on the whole, they achieve standards appropriate to their age and ability. There is no consistent pattern of underachievement by boys or girls across the school. Pupils who are on the additional learning needs register or entitled to free school meals are making appropriate progress.

Across the school, the majority of pupils can recall previous learning well and they use this knowledge appropriately to acquire information and new skills. They listen well and speak clearly, conveying their ideas and feelings fairly confidently. They work well together and respond appropriately to the tasks and questions asked by teachers.

By the end of the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2, most pupils listen very well and speak confidently. However, key stage 2 pupils often do not respond at length. The majority of pupils read accurately and confidently, and can discuss the characteristics of a variety of books and authors in both languages. However, they do not colour their expression well and a minority read rather haltingly. Most pupils can write simply and fairly accurately in a range of forms. However, their ability to write creatively and at length has not been sufficiently developed.

Results in Welsh in the Foundation Phase have improved considerably over the last three years, but they are still lower than the results of the family of similar schools. Results in Welsh in key stage 2 are inconsistent, and in 2011 they were lower than those of the family but higher than the results for Wales. Pupils' awareness of Welsh geography, culture and history is good.

In the Foundation Phase, the percentage of seven-year-old pupils who achieve the expected level (level 2) is generally higher than the figures for Wales and the average for the family of schools, at times. However, in comparison with that of similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the school's performance has been among the lower 50% over a period for Welsh, mathematics and science in combination and in these subjects individually, except for science, which was in the top 25% in 2011. In general, the achievements at level 3 in the individual subjects are usually lower than average for the family of schools, except for one of the last five years.

In 2011, at key stage 2, the percentage of 11-year-old pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination was higher than the figures for the family of similar schools and the figures for Wales. Before that, the school's performance was higher than that of the family in four out of the last five years. However, the school's performance in key stage 2 has varied from being among the bottom 25% to the upper 50% of that for similar schools nationally.

Eleven-year-old pupils' achievements at level 5 in the individual subjects have not compared favourably with those of the family over the last five years in general, except for one or two of the last five years. There has been improvement in science over the last two years. In 2011, boys' achievements in mathematics and science at level 5 were significantly higher than those of girls in comparison with the figures for the family and Wales.

Wellbeing: Good

Standards of pupils' wellbeing are a strength in the school. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and there are plenty of opportunities for everyone to take part in physical activities. They are proud of their school and feel safe there.

The school's attendance level is higher than the local authority's average, but the school moved to the lower 50% of similar schools in 2010. Pupils' attendance level for last term shows progress.

All of the school's pupils show very good behaviour in lessons and around the school. All pupils are considerate and courteous towards their peers, staff and visitors. Their behaviour is consistently good and they enjoy being at school. In lessons, pupils show interest in their work and the ability to concentrate and they are keen to undertake tasks.

Members of the School Council and the Eco Council are enthusiastic and understand that they are representing the viewpoint of other pupils within the school community. Pupils have regular opportunities to express their views and contribute to the school's development and the fruits of their labour can be seen.

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

The school's staff provide a wide range of learning experiences that meet the needs of many pupils. Many good quality lessons and activities are planned, and these capture and hold most pupils' interest. The school also provides interesting educational visits that support learning. There are very close links between the school, the cluster schools and local industry, which develop the skills of staff and pupils.

A focus on developing pupils' skills can be seen in most weekly plans and also in short-term plans. In general, the school develops information technology, numeracy and communication skills effectively, but key stage 2 pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop literacy skills, especially extended writing.

The Cwricwlwm Cymreig has a central place, especially in the key stage 2 work programme, and many pupils speak confidently about aspects of Welsh culture. All of the school's classes' standard displays also promote this.

The experiences provided by the school to promote pupils' understanding of global citizenship are good, and the 'Over the Rainbow' project has been firmly established

to support this. The school has won a British Council international award and has led on a Comenius project. The pupil's voice is a strength and the School Council and Eco Council's good work has an obvious effect on the school and the community.

Teaching: Adequate

All teachers have good knowledge of the learning areas and the subjects they teach. They use various teaching strategies in order to ensure rich learning experiences for pupils. They create a rich, attractive and stimulating environment in their classes. The effective co-operation between teachers and support staff creates an industrious and supportive ethos.

In most lessons there are lively presentations and appropriate pace. Teachers share lesson aims appropriately with pupils and arrange a progression of activities that ensure that pupils continually work productively. They discuss success criteria with pupils at the beginning of lessons and most pupils have a good awareness of their personal targets. Through effective questioning teachers challenge pupils to think. Constant use is made of praise and encouragement, which is of assistance in managing pupils' behaviour effectively.

In the few lessons in which teaching is adequate, not enough differentiated activities are provided, they do not encourage pupils to think sufficiently nor to develop their understanding and skills thoroughly. In these lessons also, the pace of lessons is too slow, some pupils get restless and the needs of all pupils are not met.

Across the school, work does not challenge pupils of higher ability sufficiently in lessons and they are not making the expected progress. In general, the activities that are planned for writing do not place enough emphasis on developing extended writing skills effectively.

Assessment for learning strategies are a good feature in most lessons. Most teachers include pupils in the process of setting targets for improvement, but the practice is not consistent across the school. Most teachers mark regularly, but marking is not always sufficiently detailed to ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work and the next steps. Marking does not always place enough emphasis on the standard of presentation of work. Appropriate arrangements are in place for standardising and moderating teachers' assessments.

There is a good working relationship between staff and pupils in each class. Teachers make good use of resources, offering regular opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills in lessons. Parents receive clear information on their children's achievements through the reports and meetings twice a year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

This is a happy school in which pupils feel safe. The school promotes pupils' health and wellbeing well. Pupils' health and wellbeing are promoted effectively by numerous sports clubs and there are good opportunities for developing a shopping venture and other entrepreneurial initiatives.

Suitable use is made of the support of external specialist services and there is effective co-operation with external agencies.

Pupils' spiritual side is developed appropriately through visiting a variety of local places of worship of different religions. Pupils' moral development is promoted effectively through the school's values, which are based on respecting everyone in society.

There is well-planned provision for each pupil that has additional learning needs. The school identifies the needs of different pupils early through regular observation, joint staff discussion and discussion with parents, and it provides appropriate programmes for them. Progress is tracked and scores compared with previous tests. Data is available for all teachers on the school's computer system, which enables them to trace pupils' progress efficiently. The Literacy and Sound scheme that has been introduced recently is beginning to have a positive influence on pupils' early reading skills.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a homely and friendly ethos. It provides a curriculum that is very accessible to all and tolerance and racial equality receive appropriate attention. Pupils take pride in the school and are aware of the need to behave well, show respect and celebrate.

The school provides plenty of suitable resources that meet pupils' needs well. Colourful displays can be seen and these promote and enrich pupils' learning throughout the school. On the whole, the buildings provide a suitable environment for learning. The buildings and site are well maintained. However, there is limited room for the Foundation Phase and the condition of one of the mobile classrooms is poor.

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

The school's leadership ensures that the school operates as an organised and industrious community, which promotes pupils' wellbeing effectively.

Leadership responsibilities are allocated appropriately to staff. The extended management team meets frequently in order to discuss managerial aspects, although the timing of meetings does not ensure sufficient time for the work. A recent innovation led to strengthening the provision for pupils with additional learning needs in their literacy skills. However, not enough has been done in order to address other aspects of under-performance and to ensure consistent and thorough quality management systems.

The management team makes use of the core data sets to monitor the school's performance. However, insufficient use is made of data that compares the school's

performance with that of other schools. Pupils' reading age data is used effectively to target additional support, where needed. The school does not use this data to identify trends on a whole-school level.

The governing body uses data analyses to discuss the school's performance, although the body does not yet challenge the school sufficiently on the basis of data that compares performance with that of similar schools. Subject liaison responsibilities have been allocated to members of the governing body and some governors have visited the school. Governors do not receive enough information arising from the school's self-evaluation systems to enable them to play a more active part in producing the school development plan.

The school pays attention to national priorities which are linked to the School Effectiveness framework jointly with the Strade family of schools. The recent initiatives show commitment to improve pupils' literacy skills and they are beginning to have a positive effect on standards.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's arrangements for managing quality use a range of sources of evidence, which include observing lessons and examining samples of pupils' written work. The monitoring forms record analytical comments, but insufficient attention is paid to the progress that pupils make in lessons and in their literacy skills. The school makes appropriate use of questionnaires in order to discover the opinions of parents and pupils.

The school's self-evaluation report makes use of data analyses and offers concise evaluations. There is a short list of areas for improvement at the end of each section of the report, but not enough is being done in the body of the report to identify where improvement is needed.

The school development plan contains appropriate priorities for the short-term, based on the self-evaluation report. There is use of quantitative targets and completion dates and costs are identified in it. However, there is not enough of a link between the plan and the outcomes of the school's monitoring systems. The development plan does not identify a detailed strategy for addressing aspects of underachievement, especially in relation to writing standards and reading ages.

The school takes good advantage of local networks to provide opportunities for teachers to visit other schools and to observe good practice. Staff are also given opportunities to see new innovations at work internally in the school. An initial link has been made with four other schools that are grouped in the same family as Parc y Tywyn.

Partnership working: Good

The school has very positive links with parents and carers, and almost all of them are supportive of the school's work.

The school has strong links with the local Welsh-medium secondary school and the other Welsh-medium primary schools that feed it. The school has also developed a

positive relationship with the cylchoedd meithrin. These close links ensure effective transition procedures. The school also has good links with the local university. This year, the school has been working successfully, with the support of the education officer, on the Quality Mark. As a result, the school's procedures for ensuring specific support for groups of underperforming pupils have improved.

The school works effectively with other agencies to expand pupils' experiences. Year 5 pupils order fruit and vegetables from a local farm, sort them and sell them to parents. The school is also a lead school on a project that promotes European links, namely 'Comenius', and this initiative feeds effectively into learning sessions and also permeates successfully throughout the whole school.

Resource management: Adequate

Recently, the school has invested generously in high staffing levels, but this investment has not yet had time to be reflected in pupils' standards and work.

The learning assistants are an effective part of the teaching team and they have a positive influence on learning and teaching.

The school meets the statutory requirements regarding teachers' workload.

Appropriate arrangements are made for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment periods.

The school has an appropriate procedure for managing performance, which includes teachers and teaching assistants.

Considering the standards at the end of both key stages, the value for money is adequate.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In assessments at the end of key stage 1, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science in combination has been higher than the figures for Wales and the family of similar schools over the last two years, and lower in the previous three years. In general, the patterns are similar in these subjects individually. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 3 in Welsh in 2011 was lower than the average for the family of similar schools.

In Welsh, the results were consistently lower than those of the family and Wales between 2007 and 2009. However, steady progress has been seen and the results are now around the average for Wales and a little lower than the family average.

Over the last four years, the school's performance in key stage 1 has in the lower 50%, in comparison with that of schools with similar levels in terms of entitlement to free school meals, except for science, performance in which was in the top 25% in 2011.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination has been higher than the family of schools average in four of the last five years.

In Welsh, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher has generally been lower than the average figure for the family of schools in three of the last five years. Performance in writing Welsh has been lower than the average figures for the family of schools and Wales in three of the last four years, and the trend is significantly downward. In English, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 has been higher than the family and Wales averages in two of the last five years.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination placed the school among the lower 50% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. Performance in English, mathematics and science has varied from the bottom 25% to the upper 50% in comparison with the results of similar schools in recent years.

Achievements at level 5 in science compared favourably with those of the family in 2011. In general, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 5 or higher has been uneven and often lower than the average figures for the family of schools and Wales over the last five years.

In key stage 1, a consistent pattern has been seen of boys' underachievement in comparison with girls'. The percentage of boys in key stage 2 who achieve level 4 or higher is uneven, but in mathematics and science percentages have been significantly higher than those of girls in comparison with the averages identified in other schools in the family and Wales as a whole.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-eight responses were received from parents and they were unanimous that their children like school and that their children are making good progress. They also believe that pupils' behaviour is good and that their children are safe at school.

They also believe that the school is well run and that the teaching is good. All parents who responded feel comfortable in asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem. They are also of the opinion that teachers work effectively and encourage children to work hard. They are happy with the progress that pupils are making and the variety of activities that are offered to them. Nearly all state that their children are encouraged to be healthy and to undertake regular physical exercise.

Most parents believe that children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs. They are also happy with the information they receive on pupils' progress and they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. Most parents are satisfied with the school in general.

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and twenty-one key stage 2 learners completed the questionnaire and the team spoke to pupils during the inspection. All learners state that they are happy and feel safe at school. They say that the school deals well with any bullying and that teachers and other adults at the school help them to learn and make progress. All are of the opinion that teachers teach them effectively about the importance of knowing how to be healthy. They know to whom to turn for support when they are worried or finding their work difficult.

Nearly all believe that they are doing well at school. They say that there are many opportunities for them to take regular physical exercise and they believe that homework helps them to understand and improve their school work.

Most children believe that other children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Ann Jones	Reporting Inspector
Michael Hayes	Team Inspector
Iolo Dafydd	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Helen Rowe	Peer Inspector
Donna Jenkins (Headteacher)	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.