



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

**YGGD Gwauncaegurwen
Ffordd Newydd
Gwauncaegurwen
Ammanford
SA18 1UN**

Date of inspection: March 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 Gynradd Gymraeg Gwauncaegurwen is a naturally bilingual school that serves the village and the nearby rural area. It is maintained by Neath Port Talbot local authority.

The school describes the area it serves as one that is mixed in terms of social background.

There are 138 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 20 part-time nursery pupils. Pupils are admitted to the school full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. Following the closure of a nearby school, 10 additional pupils were admitted to the school in September 2011. As a result, the classes were restructured, creating an additional class in key stage 2.

Forty-six per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as a first language. Welsh is the main medium of teaching. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds at present. About 22% are entitled to free school meals; this figure is a little lower than the county averages and a little higher than the national average. Eighteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, and no pupils have statements.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gwauncaegurwen in 2011-2012 is £3,565. The maximum in terms of school budget per pupil in primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £21,718 and the minimum is £2,648. Ysgol Gwauncaegurwen is in 35th place of the 71 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot in terms of school budget per pupil.

The school was last inspected during the Easter Term, 2006. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

Summary

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

Current performance

This school is good because:

- most pupils make strong progress during their time at the school and achieve good standards in the key skills across the curriculum;
- teaching of a generally good standard and the effective support of the teaching assistants;
- a wide range of experiences that reinforce and stimulate learning; 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 adequate.

Although:

- the standard of teaching is generally good; and
- the senior management team work effectively as a team and have created specific systems for raising standards;

at present:

- the school is not working strategically enough to raise standards;
- not enough use is made of direct evidence to plan for improvement; and
- not all the staff are sure of their role within the process.

Recommendations

In order to improve it is necessary:

- R1 to improve the achievement of the most able pupils;
- R2 to increase pupils' attendance percentage;
- R3 to ensure accuracy in end of key stage assessments and include pupils fully in the assessment process;
- R4 to strengthen the strategic leadership procedures in order to ensure a focus on raising standards; and
- R5 further develop the role of the staff and Governors in the self-evaluation process and in setting challenging targets.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils' basic assessment results when they come to the school show that most of them have a good level of ability in the basic skills. Nearly all the pupils make good progress throughout the Foundation Phase in each of the learning areas. Pupils who do not speak Welsh on entering the school make good progress in Welsh in a short space of time.

The percentage of pupils who reach the expected level (level 2) in Welsh and mathematics in key stage 1 in 2011 is lower than the average in similar schools in terms of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals and the average of schools in the family. In science, the percentage is higher than the average for similar schools and for the family of schools. The school's performance in Welsh and mathematics has been consistently lower than the average of similar schools and the family of schools during a period of four years.

The percentage of pupils who reach the expected level (level 4) in both languages in key stage 2 in 2011 is higher than the averages for similar schools and the family. In general, some progress has been seen in both languages over a period of four years. Science results were fairly even during this period and were mostly higher than the average for similar schools and the family. There is a downward trend in mathematics results during the same period.

The level 3 and level 5 results at the school have been consistently lower than the average results for similar schools and schools in the family.

The standards seen in teachers' assessments at the end of a key stage do not fully reflect the standards of some elements of work displayed in the school at present, particularly in oracy.

The current work in pupils' books shows obvious progress in standards in skills in general, especially at the top end of the school. Most pupils use their skills for different purposes appropriately across the curriculum.

Most pupils across the school listen attentively, are eager to contribute to discussions and to respond to the teachers' questioning effectively. The majority of pupils in the early years pronounce and intonate comprehensibly. They have a wide range of vocabulary and they use it with a good level of accuracy. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils are able to converse clearly and they discuss familiar experiences and events confidently, on an individual level and as members of a group. Throughout key stage 2, most pupils are able to respond sensibly to the contributions of other pupils. At the top end of the school, most pupils speak confidently in a variety of contexts and show a good grasp of the natural syntax of oral language.

The standard of reading of most pupils in Welsh in the Foundation Phase and in both languages in key stage 2 is appropriate to their age and ability. In the Foundation Phase, pupils are familiar with a range of reading strategies and are able to use them to make sense of print. By the end of the Foundation Phase most understand what they are reading, and express an opinion and discuss the content of books on a simple level. In key stage 2, most pupils read a wide range of texts with fluency and can respond meaningfully to the content. They can select specific parts of scripts effectively for their own use within their work.

The development of writing across the school is generally good with the majority of pupils producing an appropriate variety of written work. However, they do not write at sufficient length or creatively enough across the school and a significant number of the most able pupils do not always achieve in line with their ability.

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

Although Welsh is a second language for many pupils, they all deal confidently with the Welsh Language very quickly after starting at the school. Most pupils have appropriate knowledge of Welsh history and culture.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils feel safe and healthy at school. They are happy and aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise. They take part enthusiastically in physical exercise activities and sports at schools and in clubs after school hours.

Pupils take full advantage of appropriate opportunities to voice an opinion and express concern. Most pupils say that they are treated with respect and can turn to adults and friends for help when needed.

The school's attendance over recent years is lower than the national average and has dropped over the last two years. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school has been in the bottom 25% since 2009.

The behaviour of most pupils is good and they show respect and care for one another and for adults. They are nearly all enthusiastic learners who can co-operate together effectively in groups. They show enjoyment and pride in their work, persevering with their tasks for extended periods.

Members of the school council and the eco committee meet regularly and operate effective ways of obtaining the opinion and comments of fellow pupils. They are proud of their efforts to raise money in aid of charities and other people, such as responding to the disaster at the Pwll y Gleision coal mine.

They are eager to take part in school events involving the community and these develop their social and life skills effectively.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The school offers a wide range of stimulating learning experiences that capture pupils' interest across the school. Themes are used effectively to present a number of aspects of the curriculum. Educational visits and opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' experiences.

The schemes of work are comprehensive and detailed. Appropriate opportunities are planned in the majority of lessons for developing skills across the curriculum. Appropriate emphasis is placed on strategies for developing reading throughout the school, which includes effective use of volunteers on a weekly basis. A wide range of opportunities for the development of writing is offered, however, there are not enough opportunities to extend the standard of writing of the most able pupils.

The school uses specific strategies for developing oral Welsh from an early age and pupils make good progress in bilingual skills. Teachers model good language, and this has a positive influence on pupils' bubbling language. The Welsh ethos is promoted further by inviting visitors to the school and opportunities to learn about the history, culture and tradition of the area and the country.

There is effective provision for enabling pupils to learn about sustainability and global citizenship. The work of the Eco Council adds to pupils' awareness of the importance of environmental issues.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is generally good throughout the school. Teachers and other adults have appropriate subject knowledge and they use a good variety of methods and activities to inspire and challenge pupils. All the teachers have established a very good working relationship with pupils. The teaching and support staff's effective co-operation enriches and adds to the learning experiences in the classes.

Where teaching is at its best, there is sensible interrogation and questioning that extends pupils' understanding. The adults deliberately feed language constantly and make effective use of praise to foster confidence and pride. The lessons have a lively pace and expectations of high attainment.

Where teaching is not as good, the pace of lessons is not fast enough nor the activities challenging and differentiated enough for pupils' needs, especially those of the most able pupils.

Although there are positive aspects to the school's assessment and monitoring systems, the assessments at the end of key stages do not always reflect pupils' standards of work. It is judged that the standards of pupils' oral skills in particular are much higher than the levels indicated by the school.

Pupils receive effective feedback during lessons. However, teachers' written comments do not always motivate pupils to improve their work. Assessments are not

used effectively enough to plan ahead for the needs of every cohort within the school. There are some examples of pupils self-evaluating their work but overall, pupils are not included sufficiently in the process nor are they fully aware of the success criteria.

The annual reports on pupils' progress are detailed and give an appropriate picture of pupils' attainment and progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective arrangements are in place to support pupils' health and well-being. The school is a happy environment in which pupils feel safe. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The school welcomes the local community to join with it in events throughout the year that strengthen the link and the feeling of belonging to an area among pupils. The joint worship sessions contribute significantly towards creating a prayerful, caring and spiritual atmosphere. Pupils are led in an appropriate ethos to reflect on the ideas presented. Older pupils in key stage 2 undertake a pastoral role in order to look after younger pupils. This co-operation has a positive effect on the development of their personal and social skills.

Recently, procedures were created to try to respond to pupils' absences but so far this has not had much effect.

Appropriate use is made of the support of external specialist services including the educational welfare service, the medical service and the emergency services.

The school has appropriate procedures and policies for safeguarding.

The school has effective procedures and systems for identifying and supporting pupils with additional learning needs. These procedures meet the statutory requirements in full. Appropriate individual education schemes are provided for pupils and they are reviewed with pupils and their parents on a termly basis. In the main, the schemes have a positive influence on forward planning.

Learning environment: Good

There is a caring and safe community in the school that creates an inclusive ethos. Policies, plans and procedures are in place to ensure equal opportunities for every pupil, and those that promote equality. Opportunities are ensured for all pupils to take full advantage of all aspects of the educational experiences that are provided.

The children's good behaviour is managed by fostering an extremely caring and positive ethos. Nearly all pupils show respect towards one another.

There is effective use of the school grounds and building and the internal displays stimulate learning. Resources are neat and tidy and the site and the building are kept in good condition.

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

Leadership: Adequate

The senior management team is energetic and dedicated. A number of good procedures have been put in place recently in order to ensure better processes for monitoring standards and progress throughout the school. However, all the processes are not sufficiently clear to all members of staff. They have not had an opportunity to affect pupils' achievement either.

Roles and responsibilities are now shared effectively between the staff, although there is not always enough specified time for the management team to undertake their duties fully. Each member of staff has a specific job description that makes them aware of their role in terms of implementing the school's plans. However, not all of them have enough understanding at present of the whole-school plans for raising standards.

The governing body are supportive of the school's work and are aware of their responsibilities. They have good knowledge of the school's day to day running. They use school data analyses in order 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 similar schools. A number of governors visit the school regularly and this contributes appropriately to their understanding of the needs and challenges that face the school.

The school gives relevant attention to national priorities in connection with the School Effectiveness Framework through work on a joint initiative with ten local schools. The school has addressed the principles of the Foundation Phase in full and they have a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Improving quality: Adequate

The systems for self-evaluation have improved recently. The processes now use a range of suitable sources of evidence, including examining samples of pupils' written work and talking to learners. But there is not sufficient use of lesson observations at present, to feed into the school's quality control arrangements. In addition, the formal monitoring processes have not been established in full. This means that the evidence that feeds into the report is not always clear and there is no opportunity for staff and governors to influence the content of the report sufficiently.

There is a clear relationship between the current development plan and the latest self-evaluation report. The priorities of the plan are now based on an evaluation of the previous plan and the priorities that emerged within the self-evaluation process. The priorities have been costed appropriately, the individual with responsibility has been named, and the implementation time has been identified against the success criteria. However, the governors do not receive sufficient information at present that derives from the school's self-evaluation systems to allow them to play a more active part in producing the school development plan and set the school's strategic direction. Good arrangements are in place for developing staff professionally. A number of them take advantage of opportunities to attend courses that arm them with new skills in order to develop innovative methods of learning and teaching.

There are useful examples of the school beginning to take part in professional learning communities, such as their internal initiative that shows a commitment to improving pupils' extended writing skills.

Partnership working: Good

The school's partnership with parents is good and contributes effectively to the learning experiences. A good example of this is the work of reading volunteers who visit the school regularly to listen to pupils reading. Transition plans between the school and the secondary schools enable older pupils to be prepared appropriately for the next period in their education. The school's older pupils have the opportunity to visit both local secondary schools in order to be able to make the choice for their future. There is a close relationship between the school and the local authority's education services and this offers effective support in the effort to improve the provision and raise standards. Pupils also benefit from the school's close relationship with the local community and good use is made of small local businesses such as the ice cream parlour and the Post Office in order to promote pupils' knowledge of the world of business and enterprise. The school also takes advantage of local resources in order to promote pupils' education such as the astro turf pitch.

The school supports various charities and these raise pupils' awareness of the needs of others very effectively.

The school contributes some of the funds effectively in order to join other schools and organise joint conferences and training. They also work closely with other schools to standardise and moderate pupils' work jointly, leading to a better quality of assessment within the school.

Resource management: Good

The school has enough qualified staff in order to teach the curriculum appropriately. The assistants and teachers co-operate effectively in order to ensure appropriate support for the pupils. Planning, preparation and assessment time is used effectively. During these sessions, the expertise of assistants and teachers is used to teach specific areas of the curriculum.

Recent investment in the building has ensured an environment of a high standard for pupils. The school has plenty of resources of a good standard that are used effectively. The school meets the statutory requirements regarding teachers' work load.

The finance sub-committee meets regularly and respond appropriately to the requirements of the budget. They deal with issues such as the possibility of a shortfall in the budget and variations in the numbers of pupils effectively.

Because of the outcomes achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching, the standard of the provision throughout the whole school and the appropriate management of the budget, the school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The percentage of pupils that achieve the expected level (level 2) in Welsh in key stage 1 in 2011 is lower than the average for schools in Wales and the family of similar schools. However, the percentage in reading and writing is higher than the percentage of similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level in mathematics is higher than the average for Wales but lower than the family of schools. In science, the percentage is higher than the average for Wales and the family.

These results place the school among the bottom 50% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, in Welsh and mathematics, but in the top 25% in science.

The percentage that achieves beyond the expected level (level 3 or higher) this year in key stage 1 is lower than the family but higher than the average for Wales in Welsh. The school's level 3 results in mathematics and science are lower than the averages for the family and schools in Wales.

There is no significant difference between the results for boys and girls.

In Welsh (level 2) a slightly upward trend has been seen since 2006-2007 although the school's results have been generally lower than the family and Wales, mostly in the bottom 50% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Although the trend is generally downward in mathematics results the average has been close to the results of the family and Wales since 2008-2009. Science results (level 2) have been fairly even and consistently higher than the family and Wales for four years. The school's percentages at level 3 in each subject have been consistently lower than the average for the family of schools and schools in Wales for four years, except in 2010-2011 when the results were similar to those of schools in Wales in Welsh and mathematics.

The percentage of pupils who reach the expected level in Welsh, English and science at Key Stage 2 in 2011 were higher than the average for schools in Wales and higher than the average percentages for the family of similar schools. Mathematics results are lower than the average for Wales and the family of schools.

The school compares reasonably favourably with similar schools from benchmarking against schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals in 2010-2011 except in mathematics. The school is among the top 25% in science and in the top 50% in Welsh and English. The mathematics result is among the bottom 50% and the core subject indicator within the bottom 25%.

The percentage that achieves beyond the expected level in 2010-2011 in key stage 2 is lower than that of the family and Wales in Welsh, English and science and higher than Wales and the family in mathematics.

There is no significant difference between the results for boys and girls in 2011.

Over a period of four years there has been a slightly upward trend in Welsh (level 4), although the results were generally lower than the family and Wales, and mostly in the top 50% or the bottom 50% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Considerable progress was seen in 2010-2011. The level 5 results have been consistently lower than the family and Wales since 2006 and mostly in the top 50% or the bottom 25%.

In English (level 4) results and trends have been seen to be upward since 2008-2009 and higher than the family and Wales. The results have mostly been in the top 50%. Writing has declined and is lower than the family and Wales. Level 5 results have been significantly lower than the family and Wales since 2006 and have been in the bottom 25% throughout this period.

In Mathematics (level 4), the trend is generally downward. Trends for Level 5 have been significantly lower than the family and Wales up until 2010-2011 when considerable progress was seen. The results for science have been fairly even up until 2008-2009 where upward progress has since been seen. The school's Level 5 has been considerably lower than the family and Wales since 2006 and has been in the bottom 25% consistently.

There are no obvious differences in the data at the end of both key stages, associated with specific groups of pupils such as pupils who are entitled to free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs. These pupils, on the whole, are able to achieve levels in line with their ability.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-five responses were received. They all state that their children like school. They are of the opinion that the school helps pupils to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility. They believe that pupils behave well and that they are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular physical exercise.

Almost all parents are satisfied with the progress that their children are making and are of the opinion that the school supported them to settle in when they started at the school. Nearly all parents are also of the opinion that pupils are safe at school, that teaching is good, that staff treat pupils fairly and expect them to do their best.

Most are satisfied with the school in general and understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. They are of the opinion that there is a good variety of activities available and the school is well-run.

Many state that they receive regular information on pupils' progress and feel comfortable in asking a question or identifying a problem. They also say that the school prepares pupils well for moving schools, offers additional support when appropriate and that homework given builds well on what is learnt at school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Sixty-six key stage 2 learners completed the questionnaire. All learners state that they are happy, and feel safe at school.

Nearly all say that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress. They also know what to do and to whom to speak if they are worried or find the work difficult. Nearly all pupils are also of the opinion that there are many opportunities for them to take regular physical exercise and that they have enough resources to do their work.

Most are of the opinion that they are doing well at school, that homework helps them and that the school deals well with any bullying.

Many pupils indicated that behaviour is good at the school and that there is no misbehaviour to affect their ability to work.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Michael Hayes	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Ann Fox	Peer Inspector
Keri Morgan	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. 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 – 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.