



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 GG Rhos-Afan
Marine Drive
Sandfields
Port Talbot
SA12 7NN**

Date of inspection: June 2013

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:

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Context

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhos Afan is situated on the Sandfields estate in Aberavon, near Port Talbot. There are 365 pupils on roll, including 81 part-time nursery children. The number on roll has remained fairly consistent over recent years.

About a third of pupils come from the Sandfields estate and about three quarters of pupils come from an area which is economically disadvantaged. Seventy-nine per cent of pupils come from homes where English is the main language. According to the school, 20% are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is a little lower than the figures for the county and the whole of Wales. Twenty per cent of pupils are on the additional learning needs register, which is close to the national average, including a small number who have a statement of special educational needs. Three per cent of pupils are from mixed ethnic groups. A very few pupils are looked after by the local education authority.

The school was last inspected in June 2007. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhos Afan in 2012-2013 is £2,864. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £7,410 and the minimum is £2,806. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhos Afan is in 67th position of the 68 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot in terms of school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Rhos Afan's current performance is adequate because:

- most pupils make good progress in their listening and speaking skills;
- most pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in their skills;
- the behaviour of most pupils across the school is good; and
- there is effective provision for pupils who have additional learning needs.

However:

- key stage 2 pupils do not make enough progress in their reading and writing skills in Welsh and English;
- the most able pupils do not make enough progress;
- there is a lack of short-term planning in teaching in key stage 2; and
- arrangements for assessment and assessment for learning are not effective enough in key stage 2.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher leads by example in an effective way;
- the headteacher has a clear vision for the school and she conveys it successfully to all stakeholders;
- there is a strong feeling of operating as a team;
- members of the governing body undertake their roles in an effective way;
- the self-evaluation process results in improvements; and
- the school has established effective and constructive partnerships with a variety of organisations for the benefit of pupils' development.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards of reading and writing in Welsh and English in key stage 2
- R2 Improve boys' achievements across the school
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching in key stage 2 in order to ensure sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.
- R4 Strengthen assessment for learning procedures and improve the quality and consistency of marking in order to ensure that pupils know more clearly how they can improve their work
- R5 Ensure that the monitoring of lessons always focuses clearly on standards
- R6 Raise the school's attendance rate

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?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Most pupils listen appropriately to their teachers and to each other, and they are prepared to offer oral responses. They foster their initial oral skills well in Welsh in the Foundation Phase, and in key stage 2 they can explain what they are doing in their lessons with increasing confidence. However, there is not enough progress by the end of key stage 2 in pupils' ability to respond more extensively and to use Welsh regularly.

Pupils' early reading skills in Welsh are developing effectively. By the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils are making good progress in their ability to read effectively. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils read aloud appropriately in Welsh and English. However, by the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils, especially boys, do not make enough progress in their reading skills in Welsh and English. Progress in pupils' ability to respond to fiction and discuss aspects of what they read is not developing effectively. On the whole, many pupils make appropriate use of their research skills.

Foundation Phase pupils make robust initial improvements when developing their writing skills. They can form a variety of sentences, they have an increasing understanding of vocabulary and they are beginning to use basic punctuation in their work. However, a minority of pupils do not make enough progress by the end of the Foundation Phase in their ability to combine a series of coherent sentences to create more extended pieces.

In key stage 2, the majority of pupils make appropriate progress in their writing skills in Welsh and English. Their work shows an increasing grasp of accuracy and punctuation and the majority organise their work effectively into paragraphs. However, there are few examples of extended and creative writing for an increasing range of purposes across the curriculum. Most pupils do not make enough use of drafting and editing skills in their work in order to improve its quality. The quality of handwriting is suitable in key stage 2 in both languages.

Across the age range, most pupils apply their numeracy skills well in a range of contexts.

Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their personal targets. However, pupils of higher ability do not achieve as well as they could in the majority of lessons.

In the Foundation Phase, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected outcome in 2012 (outcome 5) in relation to developing language, mathematical and personal skills was higher than the average for the family of similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher outcome (outcome 6) in mathematical and personal skills was higher than the family average, but lower in language skills.

In relation to schools that have a similar proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school was in the top 25% for developing pupils' personal skills, in the top 50% for language skills, but in the lower 50% for mathematical skills.

At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level or higher in English or Welsh, mathematics and science was higher than the average for the family in 2012, but had been lower than the average for the family in the previous three years. In the last four years, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level (level 5) has been lower than the average for the family, except for performance in English in 2012.

In 2012, in comparison with schools that have a similar proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 placed the school in the top 25% for English and the top 50% for Welsh and science, but in the lower 50% for mathematics in key stage 2. In the previous four years, the school had been usually in the bottom 25% or 50%.

In terms of the comparative performance of boys and girls, girls are better at achieving the expected outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, on the whole, girls have tended to perform better than boys over recent years.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Pupils' awareness of eating healthily and keeping fit is good. A significant number of pupils take full advantage of physical education activities and take part in a wide range of competitions and sports locally and nationally. This, in addition to after-school activities, contributes significantly to pupils' confidence and to their understanding of the need to exercise the body regularly.

Nearly all pupils are happy at school and feel safe. Nearly all pupils' behaviour is good; they stay on task and make good use of their time.

In general, pupils do not take part in setting and monitoring their own targets and they are not clear enough about how to improve their own learning.

Over recent years, pupils' attendance percentage has been lower than in similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Over the last two years, it has placed the school among the bottom 25% of similar schools. It is also lower than averages for the family and the whole of Wales. Nearly all pupils arrive at school punctually.

The school council is an effective voice for pupils' aspirations and has had a positive effect on various aspects, including health, the school environment and resources to be bought. Pupils organise regular activities to raise money for good causes of their choice.

Many pupils develop their confidence by taking part in various activities in the local community, including regular concerts and assemblies.

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

The school provides a wide and rich curriculum for pupils, which meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education in full. Teachers and assistants work effectively to plan imaginative tasks that gain pupils' interest. These include educational visits, extra-curricular activities and regular events in the community.

Long-term planning is thorough and promotes pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills successfully. All classes provide rich, direct experiences that have a positive effect on pupils' personal and social skills.

The school places a robust focus on developing pupils' awareness of Welsh history, geography and culture. By planning visits to the local area and beyond and through studies of famous people, nearly all pupils' knowledge of their Welsh heritage is developing well. This is a strong feature.

Eco activities, the school garden and the use of local resources to promote pupils' knowledge of sustainability and the environment are developing well. One of the provision's strengths is the way in which the school creates links with foreign countries.

Teaching: Adequate

Teachers have good subject knowledge and there is an effective working relationship between all staff and pupils. When teaching is at its best, the lessons have a good pace and effective and challenging questioning responds to the individual's needs. In key stage 2, where teaching is not as good, activities are not always differentiated suitably and short-term planning is not detailed enough on the basis of age and ability. As a result, there is not enough of a challenge to ensure that more able pupils achieve well.

Across the school, successful co-operation between teachers and learning assistants give suitable support to specific individuals and groups.

Teachers share educational aims with pupils regularly. They mark pupils' work regularly and offer comments at the end of the work. However, comments are not always specific enough and they do not give enough guidance to pupils to understand how to improve their work. Assessment for learning strategies are developing appropriately, but they are not consistent across the school. On the whole, the quality of arrangements for assessment of learning is suitable. The school tracks pupils' progress, but there is not effective enough use of assessment findings to set targets.

Reports to parents correspond to statutory requirements and provide clear information to them on their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a homely, caring, safe and orderly community. There are effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing and to encourage their involvement in their school and the wider community. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and, through physical activities and after-school clubs, they benefit from a wide variety of opportunities to increase their levels of fitness and health.

The inclusive ethos and numerous experiences promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Courtesy and respect are prominent qualities in the school and they are fostered on a daily basis.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and they are not a cause for concern.

The school identifies pupils who have additional learning needs early through staff discussions and effective progress tracking and there are good quality individual education plans for them. Plans are reviewed regularly in consultation with parents, pupils and appropriate specialist agencies. Provision for pupils who have additional learning needs is a strong feature.

Learning environment: Good

The ethos at Ysgol Rhos Afan is very inclusive. The school is a close and welcoming community and there is a warm and natural atmosphere between staff, pupils, parents and governors. The school encourages pupils to show respect and concern for others and to help those who are from diverse backgrounds. Pupils are prepared well for the next steps in their education and in their lives.

Effective policies, plans and procedures are in place to ensure equal opportunity for all and to promote equality and social diversity.

There are good quality resources in all classrooms and staff use these effectively to improve pupils' learning. Resources for the Foundation Phase are particularly good and they have a positive effect on pupils' learning and the good standards that they achieve.

The building, which is maintained well, offers a stimulating environment for pupils. The school uses all of the space that is available purposefully. Displays in classrooms and communal areas celebrate pupils' work and achievements well. The outdoor provision for the Foundation Phase is good. Pupils benefit from the extensive grounds that are available to them, including a large vegetable garden which they look after. However, the toilets are not adequate for the number of staff at the school.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Good

Leadership: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision and high expectations. She shares these successfully with staff, parents, pupils and governors. She also provides clear and purposeful leadership to the school and manages its work effectively, in line with the vision. She is supported well by the senior management team and all members of staff. They work together well as a team.

Appropriate staff meetings are held regularly. These focus clearly on priorities for improvement and ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities and roles when achieving the school's priorities. Teachers have detailed job descriptions that link well with their individual responsibilities. Each teacher co-ordinates one or more areas or subjects and they undertake these roles conscientiously and effectively.

Governors support the school's leaders well. All governors have a link with a number of aspects of the school's work and this helps them to gain good knowledge of how the school operates from day to day. They handle the school's performance data effectively.

The school responds well to local and national initiatives, especially in relation to implementing the Foundation Phase successfully, improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and in terms of ensuring pupils' wellbeing.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation report is a detailed and purposeful document that is based on the findings of continuous evaluation procedures. The school uses a wide range of procedures to evaluate its work, and it gives good consideration to the opinion of parents, staff, pupils and governors.

The self-evaluation process is thorough and is based firmly on evidence from analysing a wide range of attainment data from various groups of pupils. As a result, the process and its outcomes ensure that leaders and managers have an accurate picture and understanding of strengths and issues to be developed. There is a clear monitoring process at the school, but monitoring of lessons does not always focus sufficiently on standards.

The school development plan identifies specific and appropriate objectives. These have been chosen as the most prominent objectives following the self-evaluation process. The plan has been costed and includes realistic timetables and appropriate success criteria. The staff and managers monitor progress against priorities effectively. There are already good examples of strong co-operation and sharing effective learning practices within the school and with other schools in the catchment area through regular meetings and effective use of the internet.

Partnership working: Good

The school has strong partnerships with parents. They are very supportive of the school and contribute towards a number of activities, including raising money to improve educational provision.

An appropriate range of external agencies and organisations, such as health and social services and community organisations, contribute their expertise to support the school's work effectively. There are robust links with local businesses as well as teacher training colleges.

The school has a strong partnership with the local community. Members of the community come to the school to speak about their work. These links enrich pupils' experiences. The school has an effective strategic partnership with Welsh-medium primary schools in the county and the secondary school that admits pupils. Links and arrangements with the local secondary school are comprehensive and ensure effective transfer. This prepares pupils well for the next step in their education.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has enough qualified and experienced teachers and it makes appropriate use of staff expertise. The teaching team and the support staff work together effectively and teachers make appropriate use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment.

The school takes full advantage of the link between the Welsh-medium schools in the area. This provides appropriate opportunities for staff to attend suitable training courses, including events to help to raise standards of literacy and numeracy.

There are appropriate arrangements for managing the performance of teaching staff, which includes setting appropriate targets for them.

The school development plan's priorities for improvement pay appropriate attention to the costs of the intended improvements and earmark appropriate expenditure for priorities. The school keeps an appropriate proportion of its budget in reserve.

Considering pupils' achievements, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2012, the percentage of Foundation Phase pupils who achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5) in language, literacy and communication skills and in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity was higher than the average for the family and for Wales. It was lower than the averages for the family and for Wales in mathematical development. In comparison with the performance of schools that have similar proportions of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school's performance in the expected outcome (outcome 5), was in the top 50% in language, literacy and communication skills and in the top 25% in personal and social skills, wellbeing and cultural diversity. It was in the lower 50% for mathematical development.

The proportion of more able pupils who achieved the higher outcome (outcome 6) was lower than the averages for the family and Wales in language development skills, a little higher in comparison with the family for mathematical skills and significantly higher than the averages for the family and Wales in personal and social skills. In comparison with the performance of schools that have similar proportions of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school's performance in the higher outcome (outcome 6) was in the top 25% for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity but in the lower 50% in language, literacy and mathematical skills.

As this is the first year for publishing Foundation Phase data, there is no information about trends available.

In terms of comparable performance of boys and girls, girls are far better at achieving the expected outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase.

In 2012, in key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4) in English, Welsh, mathematics and science was above the averages for the family and Wales. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level in the four subjects shows a trend of improvement over the last three years. However, the proportion was lower than the family average for three years before 2012. The school's performance in 2012 placed it in the top 50% of similar schools, but mathematics was in the bottom 50% and English was in the top 25%; before this, the school's performance placed it usually in the lower 50% of similar schools.

In general, the percentage of more able pupils who achieve the higher level (level 5) in each of the four core subjects shows a trend of improvement over the last three years. However, before 2012 the percentage tended to be far below the averages for the family and Wales. In 2012, the school's performance at this level in English placed it in the top 50%, in the lower 50% in Welsh, and in the bottom 25% in mathematics and science

In key stage 2, on the whole, girls have tended to perform better than boys over recent years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

One hundred and three pupils responded to the questionnaire. The response is very positive, and everyone agrees with the majority of statements. Nearly all agree that they feel safe at school and know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious. Nearly all pupils agree that other children behave well and also that they are doing well at school. Everyone agrees that the school supports them and assists them well, and teaches them how to stay healthy. All pupils say that there are enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. The response is more positive than the average across Wales.

Parent questionnaires

Responses were received from 33 parents. The level of satisfaction is higher than the average for other primary schools in Wales. All agree that their children like school and that their children are making good progress. They are of the opinion that the school is run very well, they feel that their children are safe at school and that pupils behave well. All agree that that their children are encouraged to take regular physical exercise and taught to stay healthy. Everyone also indicates that staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect and that there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits. Most parents state that their children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs and that they receive regular information about their children's progress.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

David Evans	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
David Davies	Team Inspector
Jeremy Turner	Lay Inspector
Eifion Watkins	Peer Inspector
Julia Griffiths	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.