



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 Gymuned Fali
Valley
Anglesey
LL65 3EU**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

Mr Goronwy Morris

for

**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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Ysgol Gymuned Fali is situated on the outskirts of the village, some two miles from the town of Holyhead. It is maintained by the Isle of Anglesey local authority. The school serves the village, although a small number of pupils come from a wider area, such as the villages of Caergeiliog, Rhoscolyn and Trearddur Bay. The number attending the school has fallen by some 20% since the previous inspection.

Pupils that attend the school are considered to be from backgrounds that are neither privileged nor prosperous. Slightly over 40% of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. No pupil comes from an ethnic minority background.

The school provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. Pupils are accepted into the school's nursery class on a part-time basis in the September following their third birthday and on a full-time basis to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. During the inspection, there were 104 pupils on the school's roll. They are taught by four full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. They are mainly taught through the medium of Welsh.

Twenty-six per cent of the pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure that is substantially higher than the Welsh and local authority average. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register and three pupils hold statements of special educational needs. These figures are close to the national averages.

The current headteacher was appointed to her post in April 2011 and the deputy was appointed in January 2012.

In 2011-2012, the individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Fali is £3630. The maximum per pupil for primary schools in Anglesey is £6563 and the minimum £2636. Ysgol Fali is the 24th highest of the 50 primary schools on the Isle of Anglesey in respect of the individual school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Elements of Ysgol Fali's performance are good because:

- most pupils make good progress during their period at the school;
- the level of pupils' motivation and behaviour are high;
- there is a wide range of rich learning experiences that fire the interest of most pupils;
- there is effective provision to promote an inclusive and homely ethos and wellbeing where pupils feel happy and safe; and
- there is efficient and effective collaboration between all staff and this, together with a range of partnerships, are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

Even so, current performance is only adequate because:

- in key stage 2, trends in teachers' assessment results, over time, are lower than results in similar schools;
- there is insufficient progress in pupils' oral Welsh skills and their extended writing skills in both languages in key stage 2; and
- learning activities in key stage 2 do not fully extend all pupils.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and deputy share a clear vision and high expectations that have been successfully conveyed to the staff, pupils and governors;
- appropriate priorities have been established that pay prominent attention to improving standards;
- there is clear evidence of improvement in important areas in a short time;
- all staff are committed to developing the school as an orderly learning community that focuses on raising standards; and that
- the governing body is supportive and aware of the way the school is performing in comparison with similar schools.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1. ensure that more pupils achieve at the higher levels at the end of key stage 2;
- R2. raise oral standards in Welsh and extended writing in both languages in key stage 2;
- R3. improve pupils' attendance;
- R4. ensure that the learning activities in key stage 2 fully extend pupils of all abilities;
- R5. ensure that the school's self-evaluation arrangements pay due attention to the efficiency and effectiveness of the schools systems and strategies; and
- R6. ensure that the targets in the school development plan are specific and measurable.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor progress against the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

In the end of key stage 1 assessments in 2011, almost all pupils achieved the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science. In key stage 2 also, almost all pupils achieved the expected level in Welsh, English, mathematics and science. This is with the highest in the family and places the school amongst the highest 25% in comparison with similar schools in respect of free school meals entitlement.

However, over a period of four years, the percentage of pupils that achieve the expected level in both key stages has varied. In key stage 2, results of teacher assessments are lower than the results for similar schools and the Welsh average in three of those years. In comparison with similar schools in respect of free school meals entitlement, it was amongst the lowest 25% in Wales in two of them.

Over a period of four years, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels also varies. In key stage 2, apart from English in 2010 and 2011, it has been lower than the figures for the family of schools and Wales over this period.

Throughout the school, most pupils can recall previous learning well and use this information appropriately in lessons to glean new information and skills. In the Foundation Phase, most children make clear and consistent progress across all the areas of learning. Their knowledge and understanding is developing well. This good progress can also be seen in the books of many key stage 2 pupils. In their lessons, most show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in several subjects. Even so, their progress is not consistent over a period in relation to their ability and previous performance.

Pupils with special needs, throughout the school, make good progress in line with their age and ability. In some aspects of their work, pupils of higher ability in key stage 2 do not achieve as well as they could. There is no significant pattern of difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Throughout the school, most pupils listen well to their teachers and willingly offer answers or comments when talking about their work. In the Foundation Phase, most make good progress in their use of Welsh from the time they start at the school. Considering their linguistic background, their oral skills develop very quickly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils communicate effectively in Welsh in discussions in various subjects. Even so, many of them have a tendency to use English when discussing their work with each other. It is a minority that use correct syntax and rich vocabulary in Welsh. Almost each one communicates effectively in English.

Most pupils make good progress in their Welsh reading skills. In the Foundation Phase, they read simple texts with enjoyment and with increasing confidence and accuracy. They use appropriate strategies when reading unfamiliar words. In key stage 2, most read an appropriate range of texts with increasing accuracy. Even so, only a minority

read aloud fluently and colour their expression well. Older pupils use their reading skills effectively for different purposes. A good example of this is the way they use an atlas and reference books confidently and effectively to find and share knowledge about different countries. Most read English correctly and meaningfully. Many of them use their English reading skills effectively to gather and present information, using their skills in the purposeful and concurrent use of language skilfully to present the information.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils make good use of their ability to write independently. They use vocabulary and phrases increasingly, beginning to vary sentences and using punctuation well. In key stage 2, the majority writes correctly in both languages and in a range of formats. Their punctuation and spelling skills are developing appropriately. Even so, their ability to write creatively and at length in both languages has not been sufficiently developed. Only a few pupils write extended pieces of work. In their books, the handwriting and presentation of work of most pupils is good.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good awareness of the need to nurture healthy personal habits including fitness. They are proud of their school, feel safe and happy there and know who to turn to for help and advice.

The motivation levels of most pupils are high and they apply themselves enthusiastically to the learning activities. They work effectively together in their lessons and activities and contribute effectively to the lessons. By the end of key stage 2, many understand how well they are doing and know what they need to do in order to improve their work.

All pupils get on well together and standards of behaviour are high. Pupils of all ages play together happily during break times and lunch times.

During three of the last four years, attendance levels have been lower than those in similar schools. Almost all pupils arrive at the school punctually.

The personal, social and life skills of most pupils are developing well and prepare them well for life and work outside school. They are nurturing a good understanding of global citizenship. Members of the School Council and Eco Council are enthusiastic and understand that they are representing the views of other pupils within the school community. Pupils receive regular opportunities to express their opinions and contribute to the school's development.

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

Teachers provide a range of rich experiences both indoors and outdoors that satisfy the interests and needs of most pupils well. The provision deals appropriately with the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the national curriculum and religious education.

Teachers throughout the school plan their lessons effectively, building appropriately on what the pupils already know. The principles of the Foundation Phase have been firmly

established and ensure that all pupils benefit from stimulating and lively activities. A range of interesting experiences is also offered to pupils in key stage 2. Even so, the learning experiences do not always ensure constant development throughout the key stage nor offer sufficient challenge to pupils of higher ability.

Planning for the skills is given a prominent place throughout the school. Good attention is also paid to developing thinking skills. Even so, the provision for developing oral skills in Welsh and extended writing skills are not fully effective in key stage 2.

Good attention is paid to the Welsh dimension through various activities that celebrate Welsh culture.

Through successfully promoting schemes such as fair trade and links with various countries, the school is effectively developing pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. Good examples of this are the close links with Ireland.

Teaching: Good

A good working relationship is obvious in the classes and the support staff work effectively with the teachers.

In most lessons there is clear focus, clear objectives, and an opportunity for pupils to reflect on what has been learnt. Purposeful pace and skilful questioning extend the understanding of most pupils effectively. A variety of interesting teaching techniques are used. In the few lessons where outstanding practice was seen, there was lively presentation and an imaginative use of resources was stimulating the pupils and making them think for themselves. In the few lessons where the teaching was less effective, the objectives were not clear and the learning tasks did not meet the needs of the range of abilities.

Most of the marking is positive and encourages pupils to improve their work. The practice of including pupils in the process of assessing their own work is developing well.

The school has recently started to use a new tracking system in order to strengthen the process of keeping an eye on pupils' progress.

Through termly meetings and reports, parents receive clear information on their children's achievements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective arrangements exist to support pupils' wellbeing and health. Respect and care are evident amongst the pupils and adults. Through questionnaires and weekly meetings, the school council and the eco council encourage pupils to express their opinions regularly, to contribute effectively to developments within the school and to be involved in activities in the local community. A good example of this is 'Y Golau', a newspaper which is published by the older pupils in order to share information with the parents.

There are numerous and effective experiences for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The collective worship sessions contribute effectively through offering pupils an opportunity to reflect, for example on the importance of those who help us.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safety.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Needs are identified at an early stage and there are appropriate individual educational plans for them. The close link with parents strengthens the provision for these pupils. A good example of the additional provision is the after school mathematics club.

The care of pupils with profound needs is a strong feature. The school makes good use of specialist services and links with external agencies. Teachers and support staff work together well as a team to ensure that each pupil has full access to the curriculum.

Learning environment: Good

There is clear attention and emphasis on creating a safe and caring environment and this can be seen in the close and social nature of the school.

The school succeeds in operating as a very inclusive community, where everyone is well respected. There are equal opportunities for all. Clear emphasis is placed on recognising and celebrating diversity and everyone has an equal opportunity. There are sufficient good resources that appropriately match the needs of pupils and effective use is made of them.

The learning environment in all classes is attractive with colourful and stimulating displays that show respect for pupils' work.

The school buildings and grounds are used effectively and well maintained. The outdoor area, including the vegetable garden, has been developed well and offers a variety of rich experiences for the pupils.

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

The headteacher provides firm and effective leadership. She has a clear vision and high expectations that have been successfully conveyed to the staff, pupils and governors. There is a positive ethos that focuses on raising standards.

Following a period of uncertainty, the school has succeeded in a short time to implement strategies that are having a positive effect on pupils' outcomes and standards. The lively support of the deputy has an important effect on the school's development. Even so, these strategies have not had sufficient effect on some aspects of pupils' achievement. The school is an orderly community and all staff work together effectively as a team. Clear job descriptions have been established and each member of staff and the volunteers are fully aware of the principles and priorities.

Governors are supportive and have a high regard of the profile within the local community. They have a good awareness of the school's performance in comparison

with similar schools. Under the direction of the headteacher, they are strengthening their role as critical friends to challenge the school with regard to standards. Recently, they have succeeded in reviewing many of the school's policies and procedures.

The school's initiatives to meet local and national priorities are developing effectively. Prominent attention is given to developing the Welsh language and to ensure that the pupils' voice receives a prominent place.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's self-evaluation procedures are developing appropriately. All members of staff contribute towards the evaluation, giving consideration to several sources of evidence. Pupils and parents receive regular opportunities to express an opinion but the role of the governors has not been so well developed. The process of monitoring lessons has only just begun.

The school's self-evaluation report is comprehensive and conveys an honest picture of the school's current situation. Even so, it does not pay due attention to the effectiveness and impact of the school's systems and strategies.

The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities and has focussed clearly on improving standards. Even so, the targets are insufficiently quantitative, and as a result, it is not easy for governors to review progress.

The school is developing as a professional learning community. There are regular and appropriate opportunities to enable all staff to develop and share information. A good example of this is the regular visits to other schools to observe good practice which has had a positive effect on the way that the school is developing pupils' thinking skills and their ability to review their own work.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners to support pupils' wellbeing and achievement. Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are strong and contribute effectively towards realising the school's aims.

The school has a prominent role in the life of the local community. Pupils regularly visit different areas within the village, and the school often welcomes individuals from the community who come to talk to the pupils in the school. This enriches their learning experiences and their awareness of their locality, Wales and the wider world.

There are constructive links with local businesses and higher education establishments.

The close links with the local nursery group, which meets in the school, ensures that the children settle in easily in the school. Arrangements for transferring pupils to the local secondary schools also prepare the older pupils effectively for the next step in their education.

Teachers work effectively with other primary schools in the area and the secondary school in order to moderate and standardise pupils' work.

There are strong links with the local authority and with teacher training institutions.

Resource management: Adequate

Leaders and managers manage the resources allocated to the school well, ensuring appropriate staffing arrangements to teach the curriculum effectively.

There are appropriate arrangements for evaluating and managing the performance of all staff. Effective use is made of support staff and their contribution has a positive effect on standards.

There is a strong link between the school's priorities and expenditure decisions. Processes for monitoring the budget are developing and give relevant consideration to the regular financial reports provided by the education service of the local authority.

Considering pupils' outcomes and the use made of the budget, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

As there are only a comparatively small number of pupils at the school, data must be treated carefully as the results of one child counts for a high percentage of the cohort in each year.

In the end of key stage 1 assessments in 2011, almost all pupils achieved the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science. This is with the highest in the family. Over a period of four years the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level in the three subjects combined has varied. It was lower than the figures for Wales and the family of similar schools in two of the three previous years.

During the same period, the number of pupils achieving the expected level in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh has also varied. In 2011, it was with the highest in the family.

In comparison with similar schools that have similar levels of free school meal entitlement, the school's performance in key stage 1 varies. It was amongst the highest 25% in 2011 but in two of the previous three years, was amongst the lowest 50% in Wales.

In 2011, the percentage that attained level 3 was higher than the family and the Welsh average in science but was lower in Welsh and mathematics. The numbers that achieve this level have varied over the three previous years.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) in Welsh, English, mathematics and science combined has varied over a period of four years. Overall, it is lower than schools in the family and the Welsh average in three of those four years.

In 2011, almost all pupils achieved the expected level in Welsh, English, mathematics and science. This places the school amongst the highest 25% in comparison with similar schools in respect of free school meal entitlement. The school's performance was amongst the lowest 25% in two of the previous three years.

During the period, the number of pupils who achieved the expected level in speaking and writing Welsh, although similar to schools in the family, tended to be lower than the Welsh average. Overall, up to 2011, the number of pupils reading in Welsh at the expected level is lower than the family of schools and the Welsh average.

Over the same period, the number of pupils achieving the expected level in speaking, reading and writing in English has risen and although it varies, tends to be higher than in similar schools and the Welsh average. In 2011, it was with the highest in the family.

Apart from English in 2010 and 2011, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or higher at the end of key stage 2 is consistently higher than the family of schools and the Welsh average in the four subjects over a period of four years.

In both key stages, there is no regular pattern of underachievement by boys in comparison with girls except that more girls tend to achieve the higher level in English and Welsh.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

The learners' questionnaires were completed by 47 pupils from key stage 2. The responses are very positive and higher than the average for primary schools. All pupils feel that they are doing well in the school and that the school helps them to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility. Each pupil feels safe and knows who to turn to if they were concerned or wanted advice. They all agree that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. Even so, two pupils say that homework does not help them to understand and do their work. One pupil was of the opinion that not all pupils behaved well during lunch times and break times.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-six completed responses were received from parents/carers. Parents' satisfaction levels were high and higher than the average for primary schools.

All parents agreed that their children are making good progress in the school and that the teaching is good. All parents stated that overall they were very happy with the school and almost all agreed that it was being run well. All agreed that their children were encouraged to be healthy and to undertake regular physical exercise.

Almost all agreed that there was a good variety of activities, including trips or visits. They almost all agreed that there was appropriate additional support in relation to any individual needs and that children were well prepared for moving on to the next school.

Nearly all parents state that they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Goronwy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Enir Morgan	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Mari Phillips	Peer Inspector
Jeannie Evans	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

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

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. 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.