



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 Gynradd Pontrhydfendigaid
Pontrhydfendigaid
Ystrad Meurig
Ceredigion
SY25 6BL**

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 Pontrhydfendigaid serves the village and nearby area in Ceredigion. The school's main language is Welsh. There are 73 pupils on roll between 4 and 11 years of age, arranged into four classes.

Sixteen per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. No children come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Although the area is under social and economic disadvantage, only 10% of pupils receive free school meals. This is lower than local and national averages.

Twenty two per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This is slightly higher than local and national averages. There are no children with a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher has been in post since 2005, and for approximately a year, has looked after two nearby schools in addition to her post in Pontrhydfendigaid. The school had its last inspection in 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil in 2011-2012 for Ysgol Gynradd Pontrhydfendigaid is £3,404. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Ceredigion is £8,706 and the minimum is £2,987. Ysgol Gynradd Pontrhydfendigaid is the 44th out of the 60 primary schools in Ceredigion in terms of school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school has excellent aspects which include:

- the use of grants to promote pupils' education; and
- partnerships with local businesses, that promote pupils' awareness of enterprise effectively.

The school's performance is good because:

- most pupils show progress and are achieving very well;
- most pupils enjoy learning and they have positive attitudes to learning;
- nearly all pupils behave responsibly;
- learning experiences are planned well;
- all pupils are supported well and benefit from a curriculum that is broad, balanced and interesting;
- teaching is effective;
- the school is led and managed particularly well; and
- the staff co-operate effectively and all contribute appropriately to the school's success.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leadership, with the support of staff, provides a clear direction for the school's work;
- changes and developments over time show that the school has a good record of improvement for the benefit of the children;
- the leadership shows clear targets and an appropriate annual improvement plan for developing the school;
- all staff have a positive and active attitude towards improving their professional skills;
- robust partnerships are used regularly to improve pupils' standards;
- funds are used very purposefully; and
- the learning environment is stimulating.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 ensure better consistency in the assessment for learning processes across the school;

R2 further develop the staff's role in the school's managerial processes; and

R3 create opportunities for staff to share best practice in teaching.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make progress and secure achievements that are either good or very good during their time at the school, considering their starting points.

Across the school, most pupils listen attentively and reply appropriately to teachers and other adults. In the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils are confident when speaking and discussing and they can extend their ideas and their opinions effectively to support their viewpoints.

In the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils can listen to and read well-known stories. The majority repeat the main characteristics of the story correctly and very meaningfully. Most pupils in the Foundation Phase use reading strategies effectively in order to read unfamiliar words.

In key stage 2, most read their work very confidently across the curriculum. They use strong research skills to inquire and discover appropriate information in books and when using the internet.

Across the school, nearly all pupils use a wide range of writing and a number of methods to express their ideas and feelings. Most pupils implement their understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation very effectively in writing across the curriculum and learning areas. Their work is consistently neat and presented in a polished way.

The mathematics skills of most pupils are good and they use them effectively in other subjects across the curriculum. The information technology skills of almost all pupils are very firmly established and they are confident when saving their current work and finding previous work. Nearly all pupils are making good progress and are using the language orally very effectively throughout the day.

Most pupils are developing very useful wider skills such as enterprise. They are successful independent learners as they evaluate their own work and the work of their peers effectively and with a specific purpose.

When comparing the school with national benchmarks, there is a tendency for pupils' performances at the end of key stage 1 to be in the top quarter of similar schools over the last three years. There is a tendency for pupils' performance at the end of key stage 2 to be in the top half of similar schools in every subject, and when combining the subjects, except Welsh, which is consistently in the bottom half. The results, in comparison with the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales, follow a very similar pattern to the benchmark evidence at the end of both key stages.

The percentage of pupils that attain higher levels than expected are very good in comparison with other schools in the family, the local authority and the whole of Wales. There are no obvious patterns of differences between boys' performance in comparison with girls as the numbers are small. Pupils with additional learning needs are making good progress. It would be unfair to compare the attainments of pupils entitled to free school meals with those who are not entitled, as the numbers are too small to establish a clear pattern.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of health and fitness and they achieve well in their personal, social and cultural development. Nearly all feel safe at school and know how they can keep healthy by eating sensibly and improving their fitness through physical exercise lessons and activities.

Nearly all pupils are willing learners who enjoy life at school. They enjoy their lessons and express sensible opinions on what they are learning. Their behaviour is good and nearly all pupils are courteous and respond respectfully to adults and peers. The system of mentoring peers is effective and older children show care and respect for younger pupils. Nearly all pupils can discuss enterprise very well and they understand the need to look after the environment and the diverse and sustainable world in which they live.

The attendance rate is good, namely approximately 95%, and is higher than the local and national averages. Over the last four years, attendance has varied from the top quarter to the bottom quarter in comparison with similar schools. Nearly all pupils are punctual.

Members of the school council and the eco council play an active part by making sensible decisions about school life. Pupils' extra-curricular work and their commitment to the local community are very good.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The school plans successful and stimulating learning experiences that capture pupils' interest across the school. The curriculum planning is good. The detail of the planning ensures an appropriate and consistent challenge for pupils.

The provision to ensure that pupils acquire literacy, numeracy, communication and information skills is very thorough. The provision to develop independent learning skills is robust and is very evident in the daily life of the school.

There is very effective provision for developing pupils' understanding of the need to look after the environment and the diverse and sustainable world in which they live.

Joint worship is used appropriately to highlight issues concerning fairness and inequality.

The provision for developing the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is developed very strongly throughout the school. The intervention groups that have been established are beginning to have the appropriate effect on standards.

Teaching: Good

In almost all lessons, teachers use a wide range of stimulating resources in order to support pupils' learning effectively. There is a very good relationship between adults and pupils in every class and the school makes very good use of all the staff's skills and expertise. There is a purposeful working atmosphere across the school.

All staff have a firm understanding of the curriculum and they question pupils well in order to extend their knowledge about appropriate subjects and concepts. Pupils benefit from the way in which teachers speak to them sensitively and praise the quality of their work. Teachers offer good oral suggestions and encouragement to pupils on how to improve their work.

In most lessons, teachers present the work well and the learning moves along at a challenging pace. In a very few lessons, the teaching does not motivate pupils to work at levels that are appropriate to their ability.

All the teaching staff, including the support staff, use behaviour management strategies effectively.

On the whole, good aspects can be seen in the marking of work and there are examples of comments that show clearly the way forward for pupils to improve their work. The process of setting useful targets for individual pupils is effective throughout the school.

Assessment for learning strategies are in place across the school. However, there are too many inconsistencies in the procedures from class to class. Success criteria receive appropriate attention and begin to focus pupils on how to develop their work. The system of tracking children's progress, and levelling and moderating pupils' work over time identifies pupils' attainment levels accurately.

Reports to parents are very good and meet the statutory requirements. All parents and carers feel that they receive comprehensive information on their children's progress at the end of the school year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully. The school provides comprehensive information to pupils and parents about school life that includes a very useful website, regular newsletters, a prospectus and the governors' annual report.

Induction arrangements for new pupils and pupils with special needs are clear and there are good arrangements in place for transferring older pupils to the secondary school. The well-ordered provision for well-being and the advantages of living healthily are promoted very effectively. National initiatives such as those on inclusion and equality are encouraged and supported very well.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

There are effective systems for identifying pupils who need additional support with their work. There is planned provision for every one of these pupils. The support is co-ordinated effectively and there are good links with specialist external agencies. Parents and carers are informed well about their children's progress and the individual education plans are evaluated and updated regularly. The effective procedures for reporting on additional learning needs in the school meet statutory requirements.

Learning environment: Good

The school ensures equal opportunities for all pupils and it is a very inclusive community. All pupils are included regularly in the school's daily life and work. This is very good practice and this positive attitude encourages pupils to consider and appreciate their diverse backgrounds. The curriculum is accessible for everyone, whatever their sex, race or religion and the school fulfils its statutory duties.

The school uses its building and grounds very effectively, especially outside, and they are well maintained. The support staff work effectively under guidance with class teachers. They present appropriate activities effectively throughout the school. The quality of resources is very good and they are used purposefully to support pupils' learning needs.

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

The headteacher leads the school very well. The staff support her well and this is a key element of the school's success. The headteacher has established very effective managerial procedures and processes. She has high expectations of teachers and pupils. This has a positive influence on pupils' standards throughout the school. The main focus of the strategic planning is improving the school by raising pupils' standards further. The plans that respond to national and local initiatives such as the Foundation Phase are effective.

The school undertakes performance management and implements the legal requirement to monitor and evaluate the teaching formally in all classes as part of this process.

The governing body is very supportive of the school, especially in using the budget and appropriate grants to develop the school. They receive information on the school's performance from the headteacher and visit classes as part of their role of monitoring standards. The members have a good awareness of the school's current performance and they challenge and question the school conscientiously.

Improving quality: Good

The process of planning for improvement is very effective and active. The self-evaluation process has been long established, with the main focus on raising

pupils' standards. All of the staff are aware of the purpose and impact of effective self-evaluation; however, their roles in the school's managerial processes have not developed completely.

The governors are a key part of the process through challenging the school as critical friends. The managers and leaders are developing an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through efficient self-evaluation strategies.

The school improvement plan, that derives directly from the self-evaluation, has a positive impact on improving the school. The plan's focus targets specific areas and the use of data in tracking pupils' progress challenges the school to raise standards further.

The staff have been included in a range of effective training and development opportunities. These include working in partnership with the other two schools that are in the headteacher's charge and with other partners, that include the wider community and the local authority.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents, the community and others are especially good. The partnerships with local businesses are excellent in raising children's awareness of enterprise. The transfer links between the cylch meithrin and the school are effective. The transition plans enable older pupils to be prepared appropriately for the next stage in their education.

Visits to the community and visitors from the community make a very positive contribution to enriching pupils' experiences. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is developed very well through studying international relations, other countries and appropriate charities.

Resource management: Good

There are an appropriate number of teachers in the school with suitable qualifications for their posts. Very effective support is given to teachers by classroom assistants who also support pupils well with their work.

There is a very good range of resources in the school, inside and outside, and they are managed well. The quality and use of the building is good. Funding is allocated appropriately for the school's priorities within the school improvement plan, and the use of grants to promote pupils' education is excellent. Specific expenditure plans are in place for contingency funds. The strategic planning focuses appropriately on maintaining good standards and promoting improvement. The school provides good value for money in terms of pupils' outcomes, provision and leadership.

Appendix 1

Comments on performance data

During their time at the school, most pupils make very good progress and achieve very well, considering their starting points.

Trends in the performance of seven-year-old pupils who attain the core subject indicator, namely level 2 or above in a combination of the core subjects, tend to be consistently high over a three year period. Performance tends to fall in the highest quarter when compared with the results of schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

In key stage 2, the school tends to be in the first or second quarter in every subject and when subjects are combined, apart from Welsh, which places the school consistently in the third quarter. These results are similar to family of schools, local authority and all-Wales averages, in the core subject indicator and also in the individual core subjects.

The school's data shows that the results of specific groups of pupils, such as latecomers, are generally good. In addition, by scrutinising pupils' work and books, it can be seen that there is a solid correlation between results and standards. Pupils with additional learning needs, including more able and talented pupils, make good progress.

The percentage of pupils who attain higher levels than expected is very good compared to averages for other schools in the family, the local authority and the whole of Wales. There are no obvious patterns of differences between the performance of boys compared to girls, because the numbers are small. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. It would be unfair to compare the attainments of pupils that are entitled to free school meals with those who are not, as the numbers are too small to establish a clear pattern.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty four parents responded to the questionnaire.

All are of the opinion that their children are safe at school.

Nearly all feel comfortable in contacting the school, they say that their children like school and that the staff's expectations emphasise working hard. In addition, nearly all are satisfied with the school in general, they say that the school promotes maturity and shouldering responsibility, that it gives their children support to settle well on entry to the school, that the school is run well and that their children are encouraged to be healthy.

Most parents understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints and feel that the teaching is good. Most think that homework builds on class work, that pupils behave well, that appropriate additional support is available for their children, that their children are ready to move on to their next school and that a good variety of activities, trips and visits are available.

In addition, most say that regular information about their children's progress is available, that their children are making good progress and that the staff treat all children fairly and with respect.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirty two pupils responded to the questionnaire.

All pupils feel safe at school. They are of the opinion that there are enough opportunities for physical exercise, that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress and that they know what to do and to whom to speak if they find the work difficult.

Nearly all are of the opinion that they have enough resources, that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that behaviour is good during play time and lunchtime.

Most feel that the school deals well with any bullying, that they are doing well, that they know with whom to speak if they are anxious and that homework helps their schoolwork.

Many are of the opinion that other pupils behave well and enable them to carry on with their work.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Nick Jones	Reporting Inspector
David Kenneth Davies	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Richard Carbis	Peer Inspector
Joyce George	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.