



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gymunedol Trimsaran  
Heol Waunyclun  
Trimsaran  
Kidwelly  
Carmarthenshire  
SA17 4BE**

**Date of inspection: November 2017**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

## About Ysgol Gymunedol Trimsaran

Ysgol Gynradd Trimsaran is in the centre of the village of Trimsaran near Kidwelly in Carmarthenshire local authority. A new building was opened on the site of the old school in September 2017. There are 166 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 26 part-time nursery pupils. They are divided into eight classes. In 2014, the school transferred from a category A/B school under Carmarthenshire's language policy to a category A school, namely a school in which Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning.

Approximately 32% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is significantly higher than the national percentage. Approximately 34% of pupils come from homes in which at least one parent speaks Welsh. Very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified 27% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is higher than the national percentage.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in October 2010. She is also the headteacher of a nearby school that works within an informal partnership. The school was last inspected in April 2012.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.  
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

## Summary

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, achieve well and make sound progress in their learning during their time at the school. Nearly all pupils' behaviour is of a consistently high standard and they are very polite when greeting each other, staff and visitors.

The quality of teaching across the school is good or better, and derives from a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning assistants. Staff provide a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. The school has useful arrangements that succeed in supporting pupils' emotional and social needs well, and this contributes successfully towards creating a caring and familial ethos. There is an exceptional partnership between the school and parents, and all staff promote an open and co-operative culture, which succeeds in ensuring exceptional commitment and support from parents.

The robust leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. They have very high expectations and a vision that is based on providing high quality education in order to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve the Welsh and English reading skills of pupils across the school
- R2 Improve pupils' attendance
- R3 Provide more opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to take responsibility for their own learning

## **What happens next**

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study describing the excellent practice that was seen during the inspection.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

On entry to the school, most pupils have basic skills that are significantly lower than expected, and the Welsh language is new to approximately 65% of pupils. However, the oral skills of pupils from non-Welsh-speaking homes develop very quickly. Considering their starting points, the work in pupils' books and in lessons show that most, including those with additional learning needs, achieve well and make sound progress in their learning during their time at the school.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in their ability to communicate in Welsh and respond positively. They show a good understanding of words and phrases, and respond to them purposefully by pronouncing and modulating intelligibly when imitating. They use simple phrases intelligently, for example when presenting and developing descriptive vocabulary following the appearance of a star and when discussing aspects of the life of the Tudors. As they move through the school, most pupils use the Welsh language confidently in their work and, by the end of key stage 2, they are just as confident in English.

By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in their reading. They read texts clearly by building words skilfully and reading independently. In key stage 2, many pupils make sound progress in their reading in both languages. They use their skills skilfully to gather information from different sources, for example when conducting research about the life of the Tudors. However, a few pupils' reading skills have not developed soundly enough in Welsh or English.

In the foundation phase, most pupils show good progress in terms of their writing skills. By the end of the phase, many write a range of sentences and texts, and use familiar patterns skilfully, for example in their work on a trip to see insects. They use capital letters and full-stops purposefully, and spell simple and common words correctly. In key stage 2, many pupils write interesting extended pieces and texts in Welsh and English, and develop their ideas well. They have a good grasp of form and sequence when writing for a variety of purposes. A good example is the pupils' poems about the river, and their feelings about the flooding of Cwm Celyn. Most use a capital letter, question mark and full-stop correctly, and punctuate by using an apostrophe and quotation marks correctly, when necessary. Most pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are of a good standard.

In the foundation phase, most pupils' numeracy skills are developing very soundly. Most are able to gather information successfully and transfer it effectively to a table and graph, and answer challenging questions while interpreting them. Across the school, pupils' number skills and their skills in using and interpreting data are good. In the foundation phase, most are able to read, understand and write numbers correctly up to 100, and the most able to 1,000. They use standard units to measure the length of objects in centimetres and recognise half past, quarter past and quarter to on an analogue and digital clock. They have a good understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and record the number of sides and corners correctly.

In key stage 2, nearly all pupils use addition, subtraction, division and multiplication strategies correctly to solve word problems and numerical reasoning problems. Many have a sound understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. In their scientific work, they record skilfully in a table and form a correct line graph of how many seconds different weights of sugar take to dissolve. In history, older pupils use formulae correctly to measure the reign of monarchs during the Tudor period. Most pupils in both key stages use and apply their skills effectively across the areas of learning.

Many pupils in the foundation phase and key stage 2 use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and independently for different purposes. For example, in the foundation phase, they use software effectively to create block graphs about the pupils' favourite colours and add a picture and information about the graph. Many pupils are able to use QR codes intelligently to solve number problems. In key stage 2, nearly all pupils use Hwb comfortably and understand how to access the different apps by using their passwords. They use software skilfully to present information following investigations into the world's rivers, and present their findings methodically in appropriate tables and graphs. They have prepared and presented a good quality and interesting PowerPoint for parents about their new school. Pupils' understanding of the importance of e-safety is obvious in the school.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Nearly all pupils' behaviour when moving around the school, during break times, morning assemblies and lessons is excellent. They are very polite when greeting each other, staff and visitors. They are welcoming, polite and treat adults and visitors with respect. Pupils feel safe at the school and know who to approach if they have any concerns.

In lessons, most pupils apply themselves to their work immediately and are ready to learn. They have a positive attitude towards their work and undertake tasks enthusiastically. Most persevere well and concentrate for extended periods of time, and talk confidently about their work. They work well with their peers and help each other voluntarily. They listen to the views of others and wait patiently for their turn, for example when expressing an opinion on how the Mary Rose sank. Most pupils develop as enthusiastic and confident learners, and respond successfully to the caring and supportive climate that is an integral part of the school.

Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of making sensible choices about healthy lifestyles and eating healthily. Pupils promote the practice of eating healthily by discussing the contents of each other's packed lunches in order to encourage healthy choices. They are aware of the importance of keeping fit by participating in a variety of physical activities during lessons and break times. Despite the limitations of the play area, during leisure periods, pupils play safely together and share equipment fairly. Opportunities to compete in games with teams from nearby schools contribute well to developing their fitness and social skills.

The pupil's voice is important and has a successful influence on improvements for pupils. Many undertake responsibilities through a range of councils. The school council, eco council, Criw Cymraeg and digital wizards make a useful contribution to

school life, and are a means of raising pupils' awareness of children's rights. More play equipment has been purchased for the playground in response to a comment by a pupil on the ideas wall. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and are fully committed to the care of, and respect for, the new building. Most pupils' understanding of elements of the building's sustainability is good. Pupils have a sound understanding of the school's principles and values, and they consider the needs of others well through their contribution to the local neighbourhood and beyond, by picking up litter and raising money to support pupils' education in Luhimba.

Pupils' attendance has decreased over the last two years. However, most parents respond positively to the consistent efforts of the school and the welfare officer to increase attendance rates. Most pupils have a good awareness of the importance of attending school regularly, and the system of recording absence promptly for their safety.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

The quality of teaching is good and derives from a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning assistants. Staff provide a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that meets all pupils' needs. They have a very good awareness of pupils' wellbeing needs and they question pupils skilfully to develop their confidence, their thinking skills and their understanding effectively.

Teachers have high expectations and, as a result, most pupils achieve good standards. Teachers explain new ideas in a meaningful and relevant way, and extend learning through hands-on experiences. Support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. However, there is a tendency at times for teachers in key stage 2 to over-direct pupils. This limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers provide very effective oral feedback to pupils on the quality of their work during lessons. This is done in a constructive manner that maintains pupils' confidence successfully. Pupils' work is marked regularly, and teachers' comments in pupils' books identify success and give good guidance on what they need to do in order to improve. There are appropriate procedures in place to provide opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others.

Through detailed planned at several levels of challenge, teachers ensure that tasks are suitable for the range of ability and that there are good opportunities in the plans to ensure that pupils build purposefully on previous learning. Pupils are given regular opportunities at the beginning of each theme to plan jointly with teachers and to suggest aspects that are of particular interest to them. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes towards their work. Learning experiences are enriched further through a good variety of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits, and by inviting visitors to the school to talk to pupils.

Communication, numeracy and ICT skills are given a clear focus in plans, and this has a strong influence on raising standards. Teachers plan jointly in great detail to ensure that the requirements of the literacy and numeracy framework are integrated skilfully in the classes' schemes of work. This is reflected clearly in pupils' ability to

develop their skills constructively and successfully as they move through the school. A particular feature is the use of personal websites, which enable pupils in the foundation phase and key stage 2 to contribute and evaluate their work jointly at school and to have access to it at home.

The principles of the foundation phase have been established very successfully. Continuous access to the outdoor areas, which are currently rather limited, ensures that all pupils benefit from an interesting variety of activities.

All members of staff are good language models by speaking clearly and correcting language patterns sensitively. They encourage pupils to use the Welsh language frequently during formal and informal activities. As a result, by the end of key stage 2, many pupils have sound translanguaging skills and develop as competent and confident bilingual learners. Provision for the Welsh dimension is one of the school's strengths, and experiences are reinforced effectively by providing opportunities for pupils to compete in Eisteddfodau and historical visits. This raises pupils' awareness and increases their interest in the traditional, culture and history of the local area, and the whole of Wales, successfully.

There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness and knowledge of other parts of the world and different cultures. This ensures that pupils are able to show empathy for the lives of others, for example by sponsoring a child in Africa.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

There is an excellent partnership between the school and parents, and all members of staff promote an open and co-operative culture that succeeds in ensuring exceptional commitment and support from parents. Successful practices include, for example, the link book that raises parents' awareness of the different classes' language patterns each week, the regular newsletters that provide a detailed report on the success of the topics that are studied in all classes, and discussion topics. Weekly discussion topics give clear guidance on how parents can help their children to improve their oral Welsh and English skills. The school provides useful training evenings on the learning methods that are used, which help parents to understand better how the school supports and teaches their children.

The school has thorough systems for tracking pupils' progress. Teachers use this information very effectively in order to identify pupils who need additional support, and to arrange intervention, where necessary. The quality of interventions ensures that all pupils make sound progress.

Assistants work diligently under the guidance of teachers or the additional learning needs co-ordinator in order to implement a wide range of intervention programmes of a high standard. All pupils with additional learning needs have an appropriate learning plan, their individual targets are specific and they identify the small steps that need to be taken to make the most relevant improvement. These plans are reviewed carefully and each term with parents.

The school has useful arrangements that succeed in supporting pupils' emotional and social needs well, for example through a positive play programme. This contributes successfully towards creating the caring and familial ethos within the



school. By providing effective sessions on personal and social education, most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit.

Respecting multiculturalism, promoting aspects of diversity, anti-racism and developing fairness, tolerance and equal opportunities are strong elements of the school's culture. Pupils raise money regularly towards charities such as the Luhimba society in Africa to support children's education.

There is a prominent emphasis on promoting the school's agreed values, and this has a positive effect on pupils' good behaviour. The 'Values of the Month' scheme, which encourages the consideration of values such as peace, respect and perseverance, supports this very effectively. Teachers plan a wide range of challenging activities in order to develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh history, culture and traditions. Colourful displays around the school support this successfully.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The robust leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. They have very high expectations and a vision that is based on providing high quality education in order to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential. They convey this vision very successfully to staff, pupils, parents and governors. The senior management team has been very successful in leading the school to being a designated Welsh-medium school, and also during the period of constructing a new school.

A particular feature is the way in which responsibilities have been allocated, and all members of staff work excellently together. This ensures that all aspects of the school's work have a positive and clear influence on pupils' achievement and wellbeing, and ensures a homely, caring and orderly community.

Leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation procedure is comprehensive, and the self-evaluation report is a detailed document that is based on a wide variety of first-hand evidence. Due attention is given to the views of parents and pupils through different committees, questionnaires and an ideas box. There is a good link between the findings of the self-evaluation processes, which ensures that the action plan is a useful and successful tool. The plan focuses well on raising standards and improving provision for pupils. Staff monitor progress carefully and submit a rigorous review in relation to the previous plan's priorities regularly. This ensures that the school continues to improve each year. Recent actions to improve pupils' extended writing skills and to increase pupils' confidence in communicating regularly in Welsh show obvious success.

Rigorous arrangements to manage the performance of all members of staff contribute well to improvements in teaching and learning, and provide appropriate opportunities to promote the staff's professional development through a programme

of relevant and specific training. Opportunities to observe each other's lessons and discuss the findings in order to set a further direction for the school's work have ensured good quality teaching across the school. The school also fosters effective co-operation with other similar schools. Joint planning to develop and maintain systems and learning methods, such as intertwining the development of skills across the curriculum, has been successful.

Governors understand their roles clearly. Through detailed reports by the headteacher and other staff, learning walks and analysing performance data, they have a sound understanding of how pupils are achieving in comparison with the performance of pupils in similar schools. They challenge in a supportive and constructive manner in order to move the school forward. These strategic and purposeful contributions make an effective contribution towards continuous improvements and the school's success.

Leaders use resources efficiently and manage the budget and monitor the effect of expenditure rigorously. The school's expenditure links well with its plans for improvement. For example, it uses the pupil development grant very prudently to raise the standards of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses 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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