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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Llyn y Forwyn
Darran Terrace
Glynrhedynog
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF43 4LG**

Date of inspection: October 2011

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 Llyn y Forwyn is a Welsh-medium primary school that is situated in the village of Glynrhedyn, in the top end of Rhondda Fach, and is under the care of Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. The school was opened in September 1985 and it serves the local area and the nearby villages.

At present, there are 204 pupils between the ages of 3 and 11 on roll, including 42 nursery age children.

The school catchment area is one that is considered to be economically disadvantaged. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils receive free school meals this year. Fifty-two pupils, that is about 25%, are on the special educational needs register, a figure that is higher than the national average. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

About 36% of the pupils are from homes where the parents speak Welsh. There are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds in the school.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2009.

The individual school budget in 2011-2012 per pupil for Ysgol Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn is £3,137, compared with a maximum of £6,499 and a minimum of £2,591 for primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The school has the 76th highest budget per pupil of the 114 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of Ysgol Llyn y Forwyn is adequate because:

- nearly all pupils are making appropriate progress in their learning;
- the school provides a caring, stimulating and attractive learning environment;
- an effective working relationship exists between pupils and staff; and
- pupils show respect and care towards one another.

However:

- the school's results compare unfavourably with those of similar schools over a period of time; and
- there are shortcomings in the short-term planning in key stage 2.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement for Ysgol Llyn y Forwyn are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision for developing the school in the community into an organised educational community that focuses on pupils' success;
- the systems for self-evaluation are robust and sustainable, and identify appropriate priorities for development;
- the school has succeeded in raising standards recently in specific areas, such as reading and writing;
- all the school's staff work appropriately as a team and share the same values; and
- the learning area leaders are generally effective in implementing their responsibilities.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 continue to raise standards at the end of both key stages;
- R2 ensure that the curriculum planning in key stage 2 meets the needs of all pupils;
- R3 share good practice in teaching among teachers;
- R4 ensure accuracy in assessment and moderation;
- R5 ensure that assessment for learning procedures are implemented consistently and effectively across the school;
- R6 ensure that self-evaluation and monitoring processes put a specific focus on pupils' outcomes; and
- R7 continue to develop the role of the governing body in the self-evaluation process.

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

During their time in the school, almost all pupils make appropriate progress in their learning. Pupils make very good progress in their use of Welsh from the beginning. The listening skills of almost all pupils are very good. Most of them respond appropriately to what they have heard and use the language fluently and effectively on every formal and informal occasion. The way in which the majority of pupils regularly use Welsh together is a strong feature.

The majority of pupils can handle and discuss various subjects effectively in Welsh across the school, and in English in key stage 2. They use a wide vocabulary, which is specific to the themes in question. Most pupils in the Foundation Phase read at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability, and they make full use of their writing skills across the curriculum. In key stage 2, nearly all can read meaningfully and with clear expression in both languages, and write to a standard that is appropriate to their age and ability. The majority of older pupils can write in an extended way to a high standard, varying style for different contexts.

The majority of pupils can recall previous learning well and most of the older pupils can apply their understanding of concepts in new situations. Nearly all are developing the wider skills needed in order to access the whole curriculum and to prepare them for the next period of their education.

There is a downward trend over a period of five years in the percentage of seven-year-old pupils who reach the core subject indicator (level 2 in Welsh, mathematics and science combined). Performance has varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% compared with that of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals. The school's results do not compare well with those of the family of similar schools or with the whole of Wales figures. In 2011, the percentage who achieved the expected level (level 2) and a level higher than expected (level 3) was lower than the averages for similar schools and Wales.

Compared with the results of schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the school's results have varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% in mathematics and science over five years and between the upper 50% and the bottom 25% in Welsh and English. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in Welsh, mathematics and science in 2011 was generally lower than the similar schools and all- Wales averages. The results in English are a little higher than those of the family. The percentage who achieved level 5 or higher in English in 2011 was higher than the family average and similar to the Wales average. In 2011, there was no pattern of difference between the performance levels of boys compared with those of girls in key stage 2.

The attainment levels of pupils who are entitled to free school meals are generally significantly lower than those of the others. Pupils who have additional learning needs, including the more able and talented, are making good progress.

The standards observed at the time of the inspection are generally higher than the data suggests.

Wellbeing: Good

Standards of pupils' wellbeing are a strength in the school. Nearly all of the pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and taking physical exercise regularly. Most of them take part in a wide range of physical activities such as sport and games.

Behaviour is good. The school addresses any case of inappropriate behaviour in an effective way. It has not had cause to exclude any pupil during the last two years. Most pupils across the school are polite and courteous, show respect and care towards their peers, and work conscientiously together. Nearly all pupils enjoy school and feel that they are appreciated and supported. They respond well to motivation and show positive attitudes to learning.

The attendance percentage over the last three terms has risen. Now, the average is a little over 93%, which compares favourably with that of the family of similar schools. Punctuality is good.

The members of the school council and the eco council are enthusiastic and they understand that they are representing the views of other pupils in the school community.

By taking part in and contributing to a range of social events and activities, the pupils have a strong awareness of the area and the local community.

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

The school provides an appropriate range of learning experiences.

In the Foundation Phase the teachers plan effectively, consider the different needs of pupils and provide appropriate activities and resources. In key stage 2, the effectiveness of teachers' short-term planning in the majority of classes is very inconsistent. These teachers do not always give sufficient consideration to the needs of individuals or groups of learners in mixed classes. As a result, the tasks presented do not always satisfy the needs of all pupils in every aspect of the curriculum. However, the provision for developing communication skills, numeracy and information technology is developing appropriately, and the attempt to raise standards of reading has had a very positive impact.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and various visits that enrich learning. There is a successful link between the school and the local comprehensive

school in order to jointly develop curricular elements, for example art projects. The provision for sustainable development and citizenship helps pupils appropriately to appreciate the environment and the importance of caring for it as well as to discover information about the wider world. Under the leadership of an active eco committee, pupils' commitment to these aspects is developing well. Pupils show empathy towards good causes by collecting money regularly.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of Wales' history, geography, arts and cultural traditions very well. This is core to the whole work and ethos of the school.

Teaching: Adequate

A happy and active ethos exists in the school, with a feeling of respect apparent in the classes. Classroom assistants give good support to all pupils, and work effectively with class teachers. Most staff use behaviour management strategies effectively to encourage pupils to work conscientiously.

In the best lessons, where elements of excellence are seen, teachers plan purposefully and challenge pupils through very effective questioning. A variety of interesting teaching styles is used in these lessons, to inspire pupils, to capture their imagination and to make them think for themselves.

In a minority of less effective lessons, teachers' planning is not detailed enough. In these lessons, differentiation is not appropriate, the pace of lessons is too slow and there are only a few opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners.

In general, the way in which teachers mark pupils' work is not detailed enough, as the comments do not identify what is needed for improvement specifically enough. Assessment for learning strategies are not being implemented in every class.

The school has introduced an assessment system recently, in order to track the performance of pupils closely, although it is too early to evaluate its impact on improving standards.

Reports for parents include the appropriate information, and suitable opportunities are offered during the year for them to discuss their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements for supporting pupils' health and welfare. Pupils are encouraged to express opinions regularly, to contribute effectively to developments within the school and to be involved with activities in the local community. There is effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school plans the personal and social education programme carefully and it plays a key part across the curriculum.

The school has appropriate procedures and policy for safeguarding.

The school makes good use of specialist services and links with external agencies. The school's systems for promoting attendance and punctuality are effective.

Teachers and support staff work well as a team in order to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. Although the structures for giving support to pupils with special educational needs have not been developed fully, the policies and regimes are effective and focus on the needs of every pupil as an individual.

Learning environment: Good

There is a strong and effective ethos in the school that promotes a feeling of belonging, respect and equality. The school appreciates and celebrates differences well and pupils consistently have appropriate opportunities to take responsibility.

The school is an inclusive community in which all pupils are treated as individuals. Equal opportunities are actively promoted throughout the school.

The school has a wide range of resources, which are used well. Rooms and empty space have been developed in a creative and imaginative way. The building meets the needs of pupils well and the high standard of classroom displays helps to create a stimulating and rich learning environment.

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

The headteacher's leadership affects the school's development positively. Her vision of establishing a happy educational environment that enables pupils to succeed is shared effectively with parents, governors and staff. With the support of the deputy headteacher, she identifies appropriate priorities for moving the school onwards. The school has agreed aims that give a clear priority to developing pupils' language.

The school's staff work appropriately as a team and share the same values. The leaders of learning areas are generally effective in implementing their responsibilities. Effective arrangements exist in terms of performance management and training staff.

The governors are supportive of the work of the school and are aware of their responsibilities. Some governors have visited the school to monitor lessons. However, they do not analyse performance data effectively in order to challenge the school sufficiently and contribute fully to the self-evaluation process.

Positive steps have been taken to meet national priorities, especially in the Foundation Phase, which is operating successfully. Reading and writing skills have been targeted recently and significant progress has been seen in standards. The school's leaders have worked with other schools in order to develop professional learning networks. The work to develop assessment for learning has begun but the process has not taken root consistently across the school.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has sought to discover the opinions of pupils, staff and parents appropriately and has responded suitably to the findings.

The self-evaluation systems are robust and sustainable, and identify appropriate priorities for development. The school's self-evaluation report is detailed but it is not evaluative enough, nor does it focus sufficiently on pupils' outcomes.

The monitoring processes, which include lesson observations, and consistent and frequent evaluations of different aspects of learning areas, are suitable. In general, however, they do not lead to setting development targets that focus sufficiently on identifying and improving standards.

The School Development Plan is linked clearly to the self-evaluation process in order to identify appropriate development targets for the school, but the success criteria overall do not focus specifically enough on pupils' outcomes.

The school is working appropriately to expand its commitment to professional networks, especially with schools within the catchment area and the local secondary school, and also to a lesser extent with other schools in the family.

Partnership working: Good

The school has very positive links with parents and carers, with the vast majority being supportive of the work of the school and contributing to it in practical ways, for example building the computer suite.

The links with the Cylch Meithrin on the school campus are effective. The relationship with the local secondary school is good, and the children benefit from a variety of transition activities. The five cluster schools have appointed a transition teacher to work with Years 5 and 6 on areas such as group-working skills and social skills.

The school takes appropriate advantage of the local authority's services, and of organisations such as the health service and security agencies.

During the last two years, the school has developed a relationship with the business communities in the village, and activities such as concerts and assemblies are arranged regularly.

The school helps to train students to be child carers.

Resource management: Adequate

The school's leaders and governors make effective use of funds in order to ensure an appropriate level of staff that have been trained and prepared to be qualified to present the curriculum. During the last two years, the school has succeeded in removing significant overspending in the school's budget.

The school's support staff are an effective part of the team and have a positive influence on the learning and teaching. Leaders operate appropriately to improve the provision in order to develop their areas further. Appropriate arrangements are made for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment periods, which gives them time to monitor and develop their areas of responsibility.

The school provides suitable training internally and with the support of the local authority and appropriate training agencies.

Considering the results of the teacher assessments at the end of the two key stages, the value for money is adequate.

Appendix 1

Comments on performance data

The results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 1 have shown a downward trend over five years. The percentage of pupils who attain the core subject indicator (level 2 in a combination of the core subjects, namely Welsh, mathematics and science) and level 2 or higher in Welsh, mathematics and science separately is significantly lower in 2011, compared with the situation in similar schools and the whole of Wales. The trend in the percentage attaining level 3 is also downward over four years and in 2011 it is considerably lower than the average for the family of similar schools and Wales in the three core subjects. No pupils reached level 3 in science in 2011. Boys have performed generally lower than girls in the three subjects over four years.

When comparing the results of key stage 1 with those of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's results for the expected level in Welsh, mathematics and science have varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% over five years. They were in the bottom 25% in 2011.

The results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2 have been uneven over five years. The percentage of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (level 4 in a combination of the core subjects, namely Welsh, English, mathematics and science) and level 4 or higher in Welsh, mathematics and science is significantly lower in 2011, compared with the averages for similar schools and Wales. In English, the trend over time is upward, and the 2011 results were a little higher than the family average but lower than the average for Wales. The trend in the percentage attaining level 5 is also downward in Welsh, mathematics and science but upward in English over three years. In 2011, the percentage who attained level 5 in English was higher than the family average and similar to that of Wales as a whole. The percentage in science was also higher than the family but lower than the Wales averages. The percentages for mathematics and Welsh were lower than the averages for the family and for Wales. No pupils reached level 5 in Welsh in 2011. There was no pattern of difference between the performance level of boys compared with that of girls in 2011.

When comparing the results for key stage 2 with those of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's results for the expected level in mathematics and science have varied between the top 25% and the bottom 25% over five years. The school's results for Welsh and English have varied between the upper 50% and the bottom 25%. Every core subject was in the bottom 25% in 2011.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to pupil questionnaires

From the 96 responses received from pupils, all feel that the school teaches them how to remain healthy and that homework helps them to understand and improve their school work.

Nearly all feel safe in school, think that the school deals well with any bullying and are of the opinion that they know with whom to speak if they are concerned or worried. Nearly all also feel that there are many opportunities for them to take physical exercise in school and that the teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. They are also of the opinion that there are enough books, equipment and computers in school for them to do their work.

Most feel that they are doing well at school and that they know what to do and with whom to speak if they find work difficult. They also feel that all the children behave well at play time and lunch time. The majority are of the opinion that other children behave well and that they can do their work.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Of the 46 responses received from parents, all are of the opinion that their children had support to settle in well when they started in the school.

Nearly all are satisfied with the school in general, and feel that the school is well run and that their children like school. They also feel that pupils are safe at school, that they behave well and that the teaching is good. Nearly all also feel that their children are encouraged to take regular physical exercise and that they have appropriate additional support in terms of any individual specific needs. Nearly all parents feel comfortable in asking the school a question, making suggestions or raising a problem.

Most parents are of the opinion that their children are making good progress at school, and that staff treat all children fairly and with respect and expect pupils to work hard and do their best. They feel that the homework given builds well on what the children learn at school. They understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints, are of the opinion that the school helps their children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibility, and believe that there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits.

Many are of the opinion that they receive consistent information about their children's progress and that their children are well prepared for moving on to the next school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Huw Watkins	Reporting Inspector
Terwyn Tomos	Team Inspector
Stella Gruffydd	Team Inspector
Eirian Myfanwy Youngman	Lay Inspector
Rhodri Roger Jones	Peer Inspector
Petra Davies (Headteacher)	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	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:

Key stage 1	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