



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 Penweddig
Ffordd Llanbadarn
Llangawsai
Aberystwyth
SY23 3QN**

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 Gyfun Penweddig is a community designated bilingual school for pupils and students aged 11-18 years, which is maintained by Ceredigion local authority. It is located in a new building (opened in January 2001) on a site at Llangawsai, near Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth.

The school has 582 pupils aged 11-18 years, of whom 117 are 16-18 year old students.

The pupils come from a variety of economic, social and linguistic backgrounds. The school's catchment area includes the town of Aberystwyth and a large rural area beyond the town. This year, 3.4% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is significantly lower than the national average of 17.4%. All the pupils are able to speak Welsh. Most pupils have received their primary education through the medium of Welsh whilst the remainder received a bilingual education. No pupil receives assistance to learn English as an additional language. Almost all pupils and students are of white ethnic origin. Welsh is spoken at home by 73% of pupils. There is one pupil in local authority care.

The school receives pupils of a full range of ability. Three per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is slightly above the national average of 2.6%. In addition, 131 pupils (approximately 21%) are on the school's special educational needs register. Four pupils have been disapplied from part of the National Curriculum.

Since the previous inspection, there have been wholesale changes to the membership of the school's leadership team. The present headteacher was appointed to the post on a full-time basis in January 2010. The two deputy headteachers were appointed to their posts in 2009.

In 2011-2012, the individual school budget for Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig is £5,033 per pupil, which compares with a maximum of £6,115 and a minimum of £4,462 for secondary schools in Ceredigion. The school has the fourth highest budget per pupil of the seven secondary schools in Ceredigion.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- pupils' attainment is very good, particularly in key stage 4;
- almost all of the pupils are happy and feel safe in the school;
- there is a wide range of activities available in the school;
- pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection; and
- the school has extended the curriculum in order to provide a range of courses that appeal more to pupils.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- there is a pattern of improvement in pupils' attainment and attendance;
- the school makes appropriate use of data in order to evaluate performance; and
- the school has taken beneficial measures to reduce the deficit in the school's budget.

However:

- the school's self-evaluation processes do not give an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement;
- there is very little direct evidence, such as lesson observation and scrutinising work, which feeds the self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement;
- the school does not meet the statutory requirements for performance management and not all members of staff have individual targets; and
- since the previous inspection, there has not been sufficient progress in important areas, such as ensuring the consistency of the quality of assessment and teaching.

Recommendations

In order to ensure improvement, the staff and governors of Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig should:

- R1 improve the progress and achievement of boys and pupils of higher ability;
- R2 ensure that the school adheres to the statutory requirements for performance management, collective worship and the content of the annual report to parents;
- R3 improve and ensure consistency in the quality of teaching and sharing best practice in teaching throughout the school;
- R4 strengthen and ensure consistency in teachers' marking and develop a whole-school system to track pupils' progress;
- R5 improve the quality and accuracy of the monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement planning processes in order to ensure a stronger focus on the progress that pupils make during lessons; and
- R6 strengthen pupils' voice through the school council and other fora.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The performance in key stage 3 over the past four years has improved and is now better than the performance of similar schools. Performance in the core subjects is good. However, performance at the highest levels varies and compares less favourably with that of similar schools. Pupils are making adequate progress from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

In general, the performance in key stage 4 across most of the indicators, including Welsh or English and mathematics, is very good. Over the past four years, performance has improved significantly in most of the indicators. Pupils make good progress from key stage 3 to key stage 4.

In the sixth form, pupils are performing well and, in 2010, most pupils gained a Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.

In key stage 3 and key stage 4, there is a slight difference between the performance of boys and girls. This difference is greater in the indicators that include Welsh or English and mathematics. Very few pupils receive free school meals, and therefore it is not possible to identify trends and patterns in this group of pupils. Pupils with additional learning needs make very good progress.

Many pupils make good progress in lessons. They build on what they have learnt in previous lessons, and develop new knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. Pupils show motivation and respond enthusiastically to appropriate tasks. In a minority of lessons, in which there is insufficient challenge, pupils' progress is inadequate. In key stage 3, a minority of pupils, particularly those of high ability, develop their skills adequately in order to achieve their full potential.

Most pupils read confidently in Welsh and English and those pupils that receive additional assistance through the Welsh reading scheme are making very good progress. Pupils write for a range of different purposes and audiences, and many write extendedly in subjects across the curriculum, making good use of subject vocabulary. However, there are spelling and grammatical errors in the written work of a few pupils. A minority of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 have gaps in their work across subjects. The majority of pupils present their work neatly.

Pupils' listening skills are very good and they work skilfully in pairs and small groups and make effective use of their time. Most pupils are confident when expressing opinions and speak clearly. Almost all sixth form pupils have gained accreditation in essential skills and key skills at level 2 or level 3 as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils feel safe at school and many feel that the school deals fairly with any cases of bullying. A minority of pupils participate in a wide variety of fitness activities, such as badminton and surfing, and many pupils feel that the school teaches them effectively about life and healthy eating.

Pupils' attendance rates have improved during the past four years, but in 2010 the school still remained in the lowest 25% when compared with similar schools in terms of free school meals. The school's data, which has not been verified, shows a substantial improvement in pupils' attendance during the past year.

The behaviour of most pupils in lessons and on the school site is very good. Almost all pupils arrive promptly at lessons and settle down quickly to work. They show respect and courtesy to their fellow pupils and to adults. Most pupils work enthusiastically in lessons.

The role of the school council has developed adequately. It has had an appropriate influence on a few of the school's activities, has had an input into the appointment of members of the senior leadership team, and has worked very enthusiastically in order to improve the provision of the refectory. However, a minority of pupils across the school, and many pupils in key stage 4, feel that the school does not always listen to their comments and act upon them.

Pupils contribute well to charity work and members of the sixth form work closely with members of the local community as part of the Welsh BaccaLaureate qualification. Many of the pupils have the skills to prepare for life beyond the school or the next phase of their learning.

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

The school provides a broad curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Recently, the curriculum has been restructured in order to promote pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills more effectively as they develop through the school. The choice of vocational courses has been expanded in key stage 4 and in the sixth form through working in partnership with two other schools, external providers and a nearby college. This has ensured a broader and more suitable choice for individual learners. The school also introduces the Welsh BaccaLaureate qualification successfully at a higher level for all sixth form pupils.

A wide variety of extra-curricular experiences is provided, including sport and musical activities, and cultural groups such as a Cynganeddu (Welsh strict metre poetry) group.

Since 2010, specific lessons have been introduced to improve pupils' skills and to develop their numeracy and literacy in Welsh and English in key stage 3 and to improve learning and performance and problem-solving in key stage 4. This strategy

is new and the school is yet to see it bear full fruit but the early signs are promising. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to nurture thinking skills and key skills within subjects.

The school teaches most of the subjects through the medium of Welsh. The success of the immersion scheme ensures that all pupils are able to speak Welsh to first language standard. The provision for promoting and developing the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is very good.

Sustainable development and global citizenship are promoted appropriately. A number of activities are organised by members of staff and pupils to raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. The school council acts appropriately as an eco society.

Teaching: Adequate

In most lessons, there is a positive working relationship between pupils, staff and support staff. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan thoroughly and share the objectives of lessons with the pupils clearly. They use open-ended questions skilfully to test ideas and to encourage pupils to expand their answers. Teachers use a wide range of stimulating strategies to generate pupils' interest.

In a minority of lessons, teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high and the work has not been adapted in order to meet the needs of the full range of pupils' ability. The planning is not sufficiently detailed and the teachers rely too heavily on closed questions. In a very few lessons, control over the class is inadequate.

Many teachers mark work regularly and provide useful and meaningful comments to help pupils to improve. However, the quality of the marking varies too much both between and within departments. In a minority of books, there is superficial marking and comments that did not give pupils sufficient guidance. In a minority of departments, good examples were found of pupils assessing their own work and learning effectively from each other. However, this was not consistent throughout the school.

Departments gather information about pupils' achievement but there is no sufficiently effective system in the school to track pupils' progress and to identify differences in the performance of individuals and groups of pupils.

Interim reports provide concise and useful information to parents about the progress of their children. However, there is too much variation in the quality, format and content of the end-of-year reports. There are some good examples of detailed reports that provide comprehensive information but do not always give a clear picture of pupils' progress. There are no opportunities for pupils to contribute to the content of reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has a strong pastoral system and promotes the health and wellbeing of its pupils effectively. The school's efforts are reinforced through purposeful

inter-agency co-operation. Most pupils know whom to turn to when they have a problem.

The Hafan centre provides additional high-quality help and support for vulnerable pupils. As a result of this and the pastoral work, there has been an improvement in the attendance of groups of pupils and a significant reduction in exclusions. The range and quality of the support from the support department for individuals and groups that have additional learning needs are very effective. A number of support clubs are held, for example reading, spelling, number and promoting language clubs. As a result, these pupils make very good progress and experience success at the end of key stages.

A suitable personal and social education programme is provided, mainly on PSE day every half term. Comprehensive attention is given to some aspects, such as living healthily, and good use is made of external agencies and companies to support the programme. However, the progression in terms of the content of the programme and learners' experiences across the key stages and the contribution of the subjects is not clear. The learning experiences and the broad programme of extra-curricular activities promote pupils' personal, moral, social and cultural development well. Although the provision for spiritual development is appropriate, through religious education lessons and religious and ethical days, at times, the arrangements for daily joint worship are inadequate.

Pupils receive individual interviews to assist them with curriculum choices in Years 9 and 12. The majority of pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form feel that they received good advice when choosing their options. Only a few pupils are aware that they can seek assistance from learning champions.

The school has suitable policies and has procedures for safeguarding pupils.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive society that promotes equal opportunities effectively. It sets high expectations in terms of behaviour by challenging cases of bullying, racism or homophobia immediately. The school ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to develop fully their academic and social skills.

The school moved to a new building in 2001 on a large site with very high-quality buildings. There are colourful and interesting displays of pupils' work in all parts of the school. There are sufficient resources for learning in general, with very good resources such as the resource centre and two halls. The classrooms are large and are pleasant rooms in which to work and learn. The physical education department makes effective use of the leisure centre that is on the school's site. The school's buildings and grounds are well maintained.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school as one that excels in every area. This vision is communicated enthusiastically to all members of staff through meetings

and school documentation. The school's aims, objectives and policies reflect the desire to ensure improvement. During the past two years, leaders have promoted improvements, such as improving pupils' attendance and attainment and restructuring the curriculum.

The senior management team work closely with each other and are supportive of other members of the school's staff. The distribution of responsibilities across the team is clear and everyone has line manager responsibility over a number of departments. Their meetings with heads of department follow an agreed agenda. However, there is inconsistency in the frequency, detail and effectiveness of these meetings. In addition, during the meetings, there is not a sufficient focus on the progress that pupils make during lessons.

Leaders' use of data to monitor performance is developing. Most leaders at every level are aware of the main strengths and areas for improvement within their areas of responsibility. The majority of leaders fulfil their role effectively and make a valuable contribution towards improving standards and provision. However, there is inconsistency in the effectiveness of leaders throughout the school.

A performance management policy does exist but it is not implemented consistently throughout the school. A minority of teachers have not been observed teaching and not all teachers have individual targets.

The governing body plays its role as a critical friend effectively and makes an important contribution to steering the strategic direction of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance compared with similar schools. There are beneficial contacts between governors and some departments but there is no consistency across every department. The governing body fulfils most of its duties effectively but it has not ensured that the school fulfils its statutory requirements in respect of performance management, joint worship and the content of the annual report for parents.

The school gives due attention to local and national priorities. This includes close co-operation with other providers as part of the 14-19 Learning Pathways.

Improving quality: Adequate

Staff, governors, parents and children have appropriate input to the school's self-evaluation processes. Members of staff have a promising understanding of self-evaluation processes, but there are inconsistencies in the way in which these processes are implemented across the school. In general, the report provides useful information and includes an appropriate analysis of performance data. However, the report focuses on the school's strengths and there is very little information on the areas for improvement. There is insufficient use of direct evidence in terms of lesson observation and scrutinising work when forming an opinion. As a result, the basis for the evidence that appears in important areas, such as teaching, is not sufficiently reliable. There is an appropriate link between the school development plan and the self-evaluation report.

Many middle managers use an appropriate range of direct evidence to evaluate areas under their control. They use lesson observations and records that emanate from scrutinising pupils' work. They produce detailed, honest and comprehensive self-evaluations that lead to useful departmental development plans. However, the detail of departmental reports and plans varies and a minority of the departmental reports do not identify the areas for improvement adequately.

The school identifies the professional development needs of members of staff through areas identified in the departmental development plan and provides suitable training to meet their needs. Teachers participate enthusiastically in many professional working groups that deal with matters such as skills development, pupils' wellbeing and assessment for learning. Early indications are that this work is having a positive effect on pupils' standards of wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

The school plays a central role within the 'Trisgell' partnership that has been developed with other schools and the local college to expand the 14-19 curriculum. This partnership has strengthened the curriculum during recent years. The quality assurance arrangements of the co-operative courses are developing well.

There is a beneficial partnership and links with parents and the friends of Penweddig association and communication with parents is appropriate. The school has increased the use made of the school website and of text messaging as a means of communicating more effectively with parents. Effective partnerships exist with the primary feeder schools. This ensures that pupils settle in quickly to life in Year 7. The school works effectively with a number of social groups and organisations, such as Keep Wales Tidy, the Urdd and Young Farmers. Promising links are being forged with local businesses.

Resource management: Good

The school is staffed appropriately to teach the curriculum effectively. The support staff form an effective part of the team and make a valuable contribution to the work of the school.

Leaders have worked together effectively with the local authority to address the deficit in the budget. By now, the expenditure is well planned and monitored regularly by the headteacher, the chief administrative officer and the governing body. The leaders now manage the resources that are allocated to the school effectively.

The outcomes are evidence that the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Comments on performance data

In key stage 3, over the past four years, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) has increased significantly. Since 2010, performance has been higher than the average for the family of schools and, in 2011, for the first time, it was amongst the highest 25% in comparison with that of similar schools nationally in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (free school meal benchmarks).

Over the past two years, performance in Welsh in key stage 3 has been consistently higher than the average for the family and in the highest 25% in comparison with the results of similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. In 2011, for the first time, performance in English was in the highest 25% when compared with that of similar schools. Over the past four years, performance at level 6 or above has increased very little. In 2011, performance at level 6 or above was better than the average for the family in Welsh, English, science and mathematics. Performance in Welsh, English and mathematics was amongst the higher 50% in comparison with similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. Pupils' progress from the previous key stage has been adequate.

In key stage 4, since 2008, the results of the level 2 threshold (which equates to gaining five or A*-C grades at GCSE) and the level 2 threshold, including Welsh, English and mathematics, have been higher than the average figures for Wales and the average for the family of schools. Since 2010, for both indicators, the school has been amongst the highest 25% in comparison with similar schools. The school data for 2011 has not been verified but indicates that the performance at the level 2 threshold including Welsh, English and mathematics has remained consistent and there has been an increase of eight percentage points in relation to the proportion attaining the level 2 threshold. Since 2009, the results of the core subject indicator have been significantly higher than the average figures for Wales and the family of schools and place the school in the highest 25% in comparison with similar schools. During the same period, the results for the level 1 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G) have varied, and the unverified school data for 2011 shows that performance in this indicator has dropped again this year and places the school in the lowest 25% in comparison with similar schools. Since 2008, the average points score (which includes all externally approved qualifications for 16 year olds) has progressed well and has been consistently higher than the average for the family of schools and the average figures for Wales.

Since 2008, results in Welsh, English, mathematics and science have improved. The school data for 2011 (which has not been verified) shows that performance in Welsh and English has dropped a little this year.

In the sixth form, the school's performance on the level 3 threshold (which is the equivalent to two A*-E grades at Advanced level) and the wider average points score (which encompasses all qualifications externally approved at 18 years of age) is higher than the average figures for Wales and the local authority average.

Over the past two years, no pupil has left the school without having gained at least one recognised qualification and almost everyone continues in education, training or employment. This is higher than the national average.

All sixth form pupils have gained accreditation in essential skills and key skills at either level 2 or level 3 as part of the Welsh Bacallaureate qualification.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

A random selection of 145 pupils from across the school responded to the questionnaire.

This sample represents a quarter of the total number of pupils in the school.

Most pupils feel safe in the school. Many pupils feel that the school deals well with any bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are concerned. The percentage of pupils that feel that the school deals well with any bullying is below the percentage that states this in other secondary schools. Many pupils feel that the school teaches them how to keep fit and most pupils note that there are sufficient opportunities in the school to have regular physical exercise. Most pupils feel that there is enough equipment in the school.

Most pupils feel that they are doing well and many note that the teachers help them to learn and make progress. A minority of pupils feel that the homework that is set does not build well on what they have learnt in school. Many pupils feel that other pupils behave well.

Many pupils feel that teachers help them to understand and improve their school work and that the staff treat all pupils fairly and show respect to them. However, only about half the pupils feel that the school listens to their views and only a minority in key stage 4. The percentage of pupils that feel that the school listens to their views is significantly lower than in other secondary schools.

Most pupils note that the school encourages them to take responsibility. Many pupils feel that the school helps them to be prepared for the next school, college or working life. The majority of pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form feel that they have been given good advice when choosing courses. This is lower than the percentage that state this in other secondary schools.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 99 parent questionnaires and most of them are either satisfied or very satisfied with the school in general.

Parents state that their children like the school, and that they are happy and feel safe there. Most parents believe that the pupils' behaviour is good and that they develop into becoming more mature and to shoulder responsibilities, and many parents note that pupils are respected and treated fairly. Most parents also feel that the teaching is good and that their children are making good progress in the school. Many parents feel that they receive good information about their child's progress and that the school prepares their child well for moving onto the next school, college or work. Most parents feel that there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits. Most parents are of the opinion that the school is well run.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Catherine Evans	Reporting Inspector
Gareth Wyn Jones	Team Inspector
Ceri Jones	Team Inspector
Kevin Adams	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Nicola Hughes	Peer Inspector
Carwyn Davies	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