



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 Gymraeg Coed-y-Gof

Beechley Drive
Pentrebane
Cardiff
CF5 3SG

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

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



INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL

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 Gymraeg Coed-y-Gof is a designated Welsh-medium school that is located in the Pentrebanne area, in the east of the City of Cardiff. The school has a large geographical catchment area and the majority of pupils come from the Caerau and Ely areas of Cardiff. These areas are described as being disadvantaged and have been identified as Communities First areas.

Approximately 28% of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is similar to the percentage for the local authority (LA) but marginally above the national average.

At the time of the inspection, there were 354 pupils aged 4-11 years on the school register compared with 323 during the previous inspection in 2004. Seven pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 106 are on the school's additional learning needs (ALN) register.

Approximately 1% of the pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. Welsh is used as the medium of teaching throughout the school, and English is added as a subject during key stage 2 with the aim of ensuring that the pupils are bilingual by the end of their period in the school.

There are 13 classes within the main stream and a class in the centre for pupils with ALN that serves all of Cardiff's Welsh-medium primary schools.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2005, but there have been significant changes in the responsibilities of staff and the senior management team during the past year.

In 2009-2010, the individual school budget for Ysgol Gymraeg Coed-y-Gof is £3,325 per pupil, which compares with a maximum of £14,067 and a minimum of £2,787 for primary schools in Cardiff. The school has the 54th highest budget per pupil of the 102 primary schools in Cardiff.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- almost all the pupils make appropriate progress during their period in the school;
- the provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective;
- the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school; and
- pupils' health and wellbeing are promoted effectively.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the school identifies and prioritises areas for improvement effectively;
- development planning is now a core element of the life and work of the school;
- the leaders and managers of the school are enthusiastic; they convey high expectations and promote a sustainable and supportive ethos; and
- the school now makes effective use of data in order to target cohorts of pupils.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 continue to raise the standards of Welsh, particularly reading skills, across the whole school;
- R2 continue to improve pupils' punctuality;
- R3 continue to develop assessment for learning strategies across the school; and
- R4 ensure that the school handbook and the governors' annual report to parents include all statutory matters.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The children's average levels on entry to the school are low. However, the majority of them achieve the outcomes expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Phase.

Almost all the pupils make appropriate progress during their period in the school and achieve standards that are appropriate to their age and ability. In general, most pupils enjoy their tasks and work happily and effectively with their peers. Although the data indicates a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls across both key stages, this was not apparent in their work or performance in the lessons that were observed during the inspection.

In general, pupils' skills in Welsh are good when bearing in mind the linguistic context. In the Foundation Phase, they understand and respond well to a good variety of simple questions and instructions. The best amongst them show initiative in their oracy skills. By the end of key stage 2, the majority speak correctly and confidently. In general, pupils' writing skills are developing well throughout the school. The progress in pupils' reading skills is not as good. On the whole, the majority read accurately and confidently but without the appropriate expression. The pupils' knowledge of the history, geography and culture of Wales is good.

The English skills of the majority of key stage 2 pupils are good. They speak confidently, read accurately and write interestingly with the best of the older pupils being able to write extensively, using a wide range of media.

All of the pupils have appropriate access to the wider curriculum as is appropriate to their age and ability.

Pupils' standards in the classes are much higher than the standards that are reflected in the data.

Since 2007, pupils' attainment in key stage 1 has declined in all of the core subjects and also in the core subject indicator (the expected performance in Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum). The school's results are consistently below the average for the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales. When the school's results are compared with those schools that have a similar percentage of pupils that are entitled to free school meals, the school is in the third quarter for the core subject indicator. The percentage of pupils that attain level 3 in Welsh, mathematics and science is also below that for the family of schools, the local authority and Wales.

Over the past three years, there has been progress in the core subject indicator (the expected performance in Welsh or English, mathematics and science) for key stage

2. The school's targets envisage a further continuation in this trend next year. The performance places the school in seventh position out of 11 schools in the family and above the average for schools in the local authority and Wales. When the school's results are compared with those schools that have a similar percentage of pupils that are entitled to free school meals, the school is in mid position for the core subject indicator. The school is in the second quarter for English, in the third quarter for Welsh and mathematics and in the fourth quarter for science. In 2010, 37% of relevant pupils achieved level 5 in English which is above average for the family, the local authority and Wales.

Wellbeing: Good

The behaviour of almost every pupil is good with the majority being motivated and taking a pride in their work. They are courteous, enjoy learning and take an active role in their own learning. Almost every pupil in key stage 2 works productively in the extended provision sessions which are held in the afternoons in order to encourage independent learning. The majority of pupils are aware of how to keep themselves healthy and safe, and to whom to turn if they have a problem. School officers and 'buddies' are conscientious when caring for younger children during the lunch period.

The school's attendance rate is 93% which is marginally below the local authority and national averages. Punctuality is adequate, although there are useful structures in place in order to try to improve this.

The school council is a successful forum for pupils to suggest improvements to the school and to implement fundraising ideas, for example Pink Friday and Children in Need. Pupils' ideas are given due attention by the leaders of the school.

The school's broad geographical area covers Communities First and very disadvantaged areas. There has been an increase in the number of pupils with emotional needs and low self-esteem. However, the majority of pupils are proud of their community with a number of them very happy to be working with a local artist on a project to brighten up nearby shops.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

Most teachers provide a wide range of stimulating and enriching learning experiences. Lessons are planned effectively using a range of interesting activities. The curriculum meets the needs of groups and individuals effectively, for example using themes that are of a particular interest to boys, and providing tasks to extend the more able and talented pupils. The provision for developing pupils' skills is good and is firmly embedded in pupils' experiences across the curriculum.

The provision for developing pupils' understanding of the need to care for the environment and the varied and sustainable world that they live in is effective. This is done through projects such as a water saving scheme, recycling and growing vegetables in the garden. The pupils also look forward to welcoming friends from overseas to the school as part of the Comenius scheme.

The provision and planning for developing Welsh are good. The school encourages children to speak Welsh at every possible opportunity. Most pupils make good progress in their bilingual skills and they are fluent in Welsh and English by the end of key stage 2. The school promotes the Cwricwlwm Cymreig successfully in every aspect of the life and work of the school.

Teaching: Good

In general, the quality of the teaching is robust. All the teachers have a comprehensive subject knowledge. The range of teaching methods and strategies stimulate the interest of pupils and keep them on task. The pace of the majority of lessons is consistently appropriate and retains the interest of the majority of pupils.

The provision for independent learning is very effective. In key stage 2 classes, sessions are planned in which the teachers focus mainly on one group that is completing a specific task based on skills that were introduced previously. The remainder of the class work independently on associated independent tasks.

Pupils benefit from the fact that their teachers speak sensitively to them, praising them for the quality of their work and making good oral suggestions for improvement and encouraging them. The marking system and providing constructive comments also support effective learning. The manner in which pupils assess their own work and the work of fellow pupils, through various methods, is effective in most classes. The personal targets that have been set in the books of most pupils focus on areas for further improvement and encourage pupils to try to improve their own performance. However, there are insufficient opportunities to develop the element of redrafting in order to raise pupils' writing standards.

The assessment for learning strategies, which were introduced recently, play an important role in some classes and are beginning to influence standards. However, these strategies are not used consistently throughout the school.

The reports to parents meet the statutory requirements, with appropriate information in place. Parents and carers are of the opinion that they receive very good information about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The procedure for registering is accurate and meets the statutory requirements. The school has successful strategies to improve attendance, for example prizes for the class that has the best attendance for the week. Absence is monitored effectively on the first morning through a text messaging system.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively through interesting activities across the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on their lives, and they are encouraged to be honest and fair, and to show respect to others.

Eating healthily and fitness are promoted very successfully, with the youngest pupils being aware of healthy foods and the importance of physical exercise. The school has appropriate safety policies and procedures in place which comply fully with regulations. There is also a risk assessment procedure in place that is operational.

The appropriate procedures and systems in place to identify, support and monitor pupils with SEN have a good effect on standards. Every pupil on the register has an active individual educational plan. The effectiveness of the Centre which provides specialist services through the medium of Welsh is of a high standard. The element of integrating the pupils in the main stream is very effective. The work and influence of the counsellor on vulnerable pupils that influences their involvement and their standards of work is an outstanding feature and sector-leading practice.

Learning environment: Good

The school clearly puts an obvious emphasis on the inclusive element. Staff ensure equal opportunities for every pupil and the curriculum is accessible to everyone, irrespective of gender, race or religion, and the school meets its statutory requirements. The support staff work effectively and diligently with class teachers to introduce a wide range of interesting activities throughout the school.

The school makes good use of the building, which is appropriate and kept clean and tidy, with colourful and stimulating displays that encourage learning, give praise to pupils' work and celebrate the school's successes. Over recent years, the school has made appropriate improvements in order to meet the requirements of changes to the curriculum and also requirements in respect of the disabled. Effective use is made of the school grounds and the nearby woods in order to promote the Foundation Phase and sustainable development. There are plenty of resources of appropriate quality to meet the requirements of the curriculum. They are used efficiently in order to support pupils' learning needs.

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

The headteacher has a strong understanding of needs of the school and its pupils. He conveys his vision clearly through a range of methods that include displaying the motto and aims of the school throughout the school buildings. He uses a range of appropriate data to monitor the success of strategies adopted for improvement. The professional development arrangements for staff at the school provide opportunities to match the development needs of individuals with the strategic objectives. The deputy headteacher and the senior management team who were recently appointed are enthusiastic about raising standards and bear a range of leadership and management responsibilities, including those for planning, learning, teaching and assessment. The administrative staff support the remainder of the staff effectively in order to ensure the smooth running of the school on a day to day basis.

Members of the senior management team make a significant contribution to the leadership of the school. They have high expectations and promote a supportive and

encouraging ethos. Their relationship with other members of staff is based on co-operation and an appreciation of each other's contribution. In general, members of the school's governing body bear their responsibilities effectively and understand their role. Governors receive reports about end of key stage performance and consider the relevant outcomes such as the difference between the performance of boys and girls. The contribution of the governing body to the self-evaluation process stimulates improvements in the provision by ensuring that intervention arrangements are in place in order to ensure inclusion and also to address the task of raising standards. However, neither the handbook nor the annual report to parents meets the statutory requirements in full.

The school gives appropriate consideration to a wide range of national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase provision was established successfully by ensuring appropriate and adequate resources that are managed efficiently. Some parts of the external environment were modified effectively recently to promote and facilitate the development. Closing the gap between the performance of boys and girls is a priority for the school and is receiving due attention and some of the principles of the School Effectiveness Framework such as professional learning communities are already an important and operational element.

Improving quality: Good

The good leadership and high expectations of the headteacher and the enthusiastic new senior management team ensure that the school's managerial systems are effective. A clear focus can be seen in the self-evaluation process on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. The self-evaluation report is of good quality and provides a clear direction that identifies and targets priorities in the school's development plan. The school listens to parents' and pupils' opinions when planning this document.

The school has an effective and regular system of evaluating standards and provision across the classes. The system includes examining and updating the school's documentation, monitoring teaching and learning through classroom observations, and analysing and moderating children's work.

The school's staff work together well as a learning community and share best practice and recent educational priorities in their regular staff meetings. Effective networks of professional practice with other schools and partners are developing well. A number of language and reading initiatives that were introduced recently are beginning to have a positive impact on standards, for example the Voluntary Reading Scheme.

Partnership working: Good

The school works closely and effectively with a number of partners including parents, other schools in the Plasmawr cluster, nearby English-medium schools, nearby nurseries, the local authority, initial teacher training institutions and the community.

The good and close links with the secondary school that promote improvements in the standardisation and moderation of pupils' work are beginning to have a positive

impact on standards. For example, joint meetings are held between the secondary school and primary school teachers to develop subject portfolios in order to promote better consistency when moderating pupils' assessments in core subjects at the end of key stage 2. The school has effective and convenient arrangements in order to promote pupils' wellbeing when transferring from the primary school to the secondary school.

The school has effective arrangements in place to ensure that pupils settle in well as they begin school and also as they transfer to the secondary school. It provides comprehensive information to parents and carers about appropriate matters through letters and the school's website.

The partnership between the school and parents is strong and the parents are supportive of all the activities that are provided. They state that they receive regular information about their children's progress and are very satisfied with all aspects of the life of the school. Effective collaboration exists between the school, the governors and parents. The school also has a partnership with friends of the school, that include a number of men who attend the school on a regular basis in order to promote boys' reading skills and to be role models for them in this field.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources well and expenditure is monitored regularly and appropriately. The school has a wide range of resources for learning and teaching. It also has sufficient experienced and support staff. The classroom assistants fulfil their role well and make an important contribution to the life and work of the school.

The governing body keeps a watchful eye on the budget. It spends in accordance with the school development plan and ensures that a large amount of funding is not kept in reserve.

Teachers make effective use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment. The management of this time is good. The teachers with teaching and learning responsibilities have clear responsibilities and expectations. The school has an appropriate system of performance management that provides opportunities for continuous professional development.

The school provides good value for money when considering the progress of most pupils, together with the good and provident use of the funding.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixteen parent questionnaires were returned and most of them are either satisfied or very satisfied with the school in general. Every one of them stated that their children enjoyed the school, that they feel safe there and that they received support to settle in well when they started at the school. Most also believe that the behaviour of pupils is good, and that pupils are respected, treated fairly and developing into becoming more mature and shouldering responsibilities. Almost all of the parents feel that the teaching is good and the majority feel that their children are making good progress in the school. However, a few parents feel that they do not receive regular information about their children's progress and that the homework that is set does not build well on what the children learn in school. Most parents were of the opinion that the school was run well or very well. Everyone felt that the school provides a good variety of activities, including trips or visits.

Responses to learner questionnaires

The learner questionnaire was completed by 98 key stage 2 pupils and members of the team also spoke to other pupils during the inspection. Almost all stated that they feel safe in the school, that it deals well with bullying and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. Everyone knows to whom they can talk if they have concerns or if they are having difficulty with their work. Almost all the pupils are of the opinion that the teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. Almost everyone felt that they are doing well in the school. A few children felt that not every child is well-behaved at play times and at lunch time and a similar number feel that other children's behaviour impairs their ability to do their work.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Huw Watkins	Reporting Inspector
Ann Jones	Team Inspector
Eirian Myfanwy Youngman	Lay Inspector
Elfed Williams	Peer Inspector
Michael Hayes	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