



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 Gymunedol Ponsian

**Pont-Sian
Llandysul
Ceredigion
SA44 4UB**

Date of inspection: March 2011

by

Gareth Wyn Jones

for

**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.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2011: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Context

The school is situated in the village of Pontsian in the Vale of Clettwr. Ysgol Pontsian is a bilingual community primary school that serves the village and the surrounding rural area. There are 36 full-time pupils, from 4 to 11 years of age, on the school roll and they have been divided into two classes.

Welsh is the main language spoken in the home by about a third of the pupils and English is the first language of the remainder. There are no pupils from a minority ethnic background. Every pupil is expected to be fluent in both Welsh and English by the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2).

According to the school, the area is neither socially nor economically deprived, nor prosperous, and 14% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is slightly lower than the national average. The school notes that 25% of pupils have special educational needs (SEN) which is slightly higher than the national average, and one pupil has a statement of SEN.

The school's per capita budget is £3743, which compares with a maximum of £24,095 and a minimum of £2741 for primary schools in Ceredigion authority. The school has the 29th highest budget per pupil out of the 63 primary schools in Ceredigion.

The school was last inspected in March 2005. Since then, the school has been part of an informal federalisation scheme with Ysgol Uwchradd Dyffryn Teifi.

The Head teacher of Dyffryn Teifi has been the Acting Head teacher of Ysgol Pontsian since September 2009, with an assistant Head teacher located on the primary school site since this period.

Summary

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

Current performance

This school is good because:

- pupils of different abilities make good progress;
- thorough attention is paid to pupils' wellbeing;
- pupils benefit from an engaging and varied curriculum;
- there is a very welcoming ethos which ensures that all pupils are happy and safe;
- pupils develop good social skills;
- there are good links with parents and the community;
- leadership is strong;
- governors know the school thoroughly and challenge decisions;
- the school pays good attention to a number of local and national priorities.

Prospects for improvement

- Substantial progress has been made on the matters requiring attention identified in the previous inspection report.
- Standards have been good over the last three years in pupils' attainment in the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science.
- The school is led effectively and has a clear and shared sense of purpose and direction. The inspection team is confident that the school will be able to make further improvements.

Recommendations

There is a need to:

- R1 sustain the current good standards and aim for excellent standards;
- R2 enrich the outdoor provision for Foundation Phase pupils;
- R3 improve the quality of handwriting, especially amongst KS2 boys, and
- R4 ensure that the health and safety matters discussed during the inspection are addressed.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

When they start school, the majority of pupils have a higher level of basic skills than the expected average.

Most pupils achieve the outcomes expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Phase, that is the reception class of September 2009. Due to the often small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of teacher assessments have to be treated with care because, in some years, one pupil's results can have a substantial impact on the school's overall performance.

Since 2007/2008 in KS1, the percentage of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (CSI) (the expected level in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science) has been higher than the average achieved by schools with similar percentages of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

In KS1 also, attainment in mathematics and science compares favourably with other schools in their family and was in the top quartile in 2008/9 and 2009/10. The percentage of pupils who attain higher than the expected norm is better than that of the family of schools in these subjects.

Since 2007/2008 in KS1, attainment in Welsh first language has fluctuated between the bottom and top quartiles. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment in KS1, although boys did not achieve as well as the girls in Welsh in 2010.

In KS2, since 2007/2008, with the exception of 2008/2009, the percentage of pupils achieving the CSI has been above the average achieved by schools with similar percentages of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. KS2 results are higher than the County and Wales in every measure in 2009/10, but especially so in mathematics and science.

There is a pattern of general improvement in pupils' achievement in the core subjects in KS2 between 2007/2008 and 2009/2010 although the percentage of pupils achieving higher than the expected norm is lower than the family of schools in these subjects, with the exception of English.

In KS2, there is no considerable difference between boys' and girls' achievement, although the girls did not achieve as well as the boys in Welsh in 2010.

The majority of pupils in both key stages make good progress in terms of the development of their key skills. They listen attentively, speak clearly and read confidently in Welsh and English.

Pupils' writing work is effective when writing for different purposes however there is not as much extended writing to be seen in their work. They make appropriate use of technical terms and they organise their work effectively although the handwriting of a minority of boys in KS2 is untidy.

The majority of pupils make progress in numeracy and the majority apply their skills well across the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and the bilingual standards of all pupils are good. There is no significant difference between the performance of sub-groups of pupils.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils enjoy school and feel valued and supported. Pupils work hard and contribute enthusiastically in lessons and do their very best. Pupils are active in their lessons and, at times, make decisions on how to do their work and how to present it.

All pupils feel safe at the school and say that very little bullying or harassment occurs. Where such instances do arise, pupils consider that the school deals effectively with them. No pupil has been excluded in the last three years.

Most pupils have a very thorough knowledge of what makes a healthy lifestyle. They eat healthily in school and most take part in a wide range of physical exercise activities.

Attendance over the last three years has been over 95.6% and has placed the school in the top quartile in comparison with similar schools in each year. Punctuality is good.

The School Council, which is also an Eco Committee, is effective and makes valuable suggestions on how to improve the school. The chairperson of the governing body often attends the meetings.

Pupils are courteous and friendly and their behaviour is extremely disciplined. The care shown by older pupils towards the youngest pupils is a strong feature of the school.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
---	-------------

Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a range of experiences that meet the requirements of individual pupils and the statutory requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum in KS2 successfully builds on pupils' experiences in the Foundation Phase and KS1 and the curriculum for pupils with SEN is suitable.

Teachers plan flexible work programmes with appropriate aims and objectives in the National Curriculum subjects. There are appropriate schemes of work for every subject for both classes.

Good attention is given to fostering pupils' skills. The school makes appropriate use of thinking skills strategies, encouraging pupils to weigh up the options before reaching a decision. Pupils have increasing opportunities to develop their ICT.

The school provides very effectively for the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* and Welsh (first language). The classes are carefully organised to respond to the requirements of pupils of different ages and abilities in the Foundation Phase, KS1 and KS2.

The school presents interesting work to develop pupils' understanding of sustainable development, and has won the green flag award twice. The school's work on global citizenship is developing appropriately.

Teaching: Good

The school uses a wide range of teaching methods and strategies which ensure that pupils are motivated and stimulated to make good progress.

Teachers have competent subject knowledge, are good language role-models, and encourage pupils to speak accurately and confidently. Teachers make appropriate and thorough use of the resources. They borrow artefacts from a local collection and from the local secondary school in order to enrich pupils' experiences. Effective use is made of technology to promote teaching in both key stages.

Pupils are aware of what they need to do in order to succeed in every lesson and this has a significant impact on standards of work. In some instances, pupils assess their own work effectively. Pupils' work is marked accurately, although in general, pupils are not given enough responsibility to improve their work. There are suitable procedures to record pupils' progress and achievements and to report to parents.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is an organised and caring community which has expectations and rules that are clearly understood. The school has appropriate policies and arrangements for promoting pupils' healthy lifestyle and wellbeing.

The school is planning for Stage 2 of the Healthy School Initiative and the School Council /Eco Committee supports this intention effectively by running the school's fruit shop. The shop is well managed by pupils and the considerable profit is used for the pupils' benefit.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully through a range of interesting experiences.

Useful information is provided for parents, including the schools procedures for dealing with complaints. Induction arrangements for pupils are very effective and all pupils receive appropriate guidance and support. Frequent use is made of various agencies to promote pupils' knowledge of matters such as safety, health and hygiene.

The school has an appropriate policy and systems for safeguarding pupils and the school satisfies safeguarding regulations in full; the responsibilities of all members of staff are clear. The school follows the county policy in relation to risk assessments. The appropriate steps are taken to ensure safety on the site, although a few minor issues need to be addressed.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is thorough. Detailed records are kept of these pupils and their needs, including suitable Individual Education Plans. Their progress is assessed on a regular basis and targets for improvement are often met. The school's procedures for reporting on additional learning needs satisfy statutory requirements.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a safe and welcoming environment for every pupil. It is a wholly inclusive community and ensures equal opportunity for all. The curriculum is accessible to all which enables every pupil to make the most of every aspect of the educational experiences provided. All pupils develop their understanding of different cultures and religions in an appropriate manner and the school meets its statutory obligations in every instance.

The school is a pleasant and welcoming place and the classrooms and small hall have been decorated in a very stimulating and interesting manner with pupils' work and purposeful educational material. The school makes effective use of the building. Despite this, the space is confined and, at times, the roof and walls are not watertight. The outside space and outdoor resources for Foundation Phase children are limited.

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

Leadership: Good

The acting head teacher is an effective leader who ensures high standards. He has fostered a very strong sense of collaboration with all staff to create a positive ethos. The assistant head teacher on site ensures that the school runs very smoothly from day to day. Job descriptions outline the roles and responsibilities of staff. Teachers share the responsibilities for subjects and areas.

The school pays close attention to Performance Management and the outcomes inform the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The arrangements for professional development and training sessions for all members of staff provide suitable opportunities for everybody to acquire new skills and to reflect on effective practice. Appropriate attention is given to meeting local and national priorities.

The governors know the school well, and the Chairperson is extremely well-informed about the school. She has a thorough understanding of her responsibilities and works closely with the head teacher to set an appropriate strategic direction for the school's development. Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school and challenge decisions; they receive information on a regular basis about pupils' achievement and about the quality of teaching and learning.

Pupils' views influence aspects of the life and work of the school. The school also takes account of parents' views when forward planning.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation system is comprehensive: a wide range of first-hand evidence from teaching and learning is used. There is a close link with the SIP which includes clear targets and criteria against which to measure them. The roles and contribution of members of staff to the arrangements are clear. Pupils' and parents' opinions are given due consideration. These opinions help to determine strengths and areas for improvement.

The school has a suitable overview of the areas that it has identified for improvement. The SIP identifies a large number of priorities for improvement, and the cost, timetable and responsibilities of staff in responding to every priority have been clearly noted.

The head teacher, staff and governing body continuously strive to improve the school's previous performance and there are clear signs that standards are continuing to rise, especially in language.

Significant progress has been made since the last inspection, including the need to continue to give attention to developing pupils' awareness of global citizenship.

The school benefits from the link with the local secondary school to share experiences and exchange practices. The catchment area arrangements for curricular planning contribute well to strengthening the culture of discussion between the schools on professional matters.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a number of useful strategic partnerships. There is a strong relationship with parents and also close links with the local community, which has a positive impact on the quality of education. The school is supported effectively by the education service of the unitary authority. Links with various charities and agencies promote the wellbeing of pupils. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is promoted through the curriculum.

There is a link with local primary schools in order to share and exchange practice. The school works closely with primary and secondary schools in the area to standardise assessments in key stages 2 and 3. The school works effectively with the local secondary school to prepare the older pupils appropriately for the next stage of their learning.

Resource management: Good

Overall, the school has sufficient good quality resources. However, the provision for the outdoor area of the Foundation Phase is not adequate for ensuring a variety of suitable experiences.

A report on Ysgol Gymunedol Pontsian
March 2011

The school has enthusiastic members of staff who are qualified to teach the full curriculum. Teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time effectively. Learning support staff are used to good effect. The governing body and the head teacher administer the budget appropriately. The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Almost half the parents completed the questionnaire. On the whole, they expressed very positive views about the school. Most are satisfied with the school and say their children are happy there and have had support to settle in well. Many feel comfortable that their children are safe at school. Almost all parents are of the opinion that their children make good progress and that teaching is good. The majority of parents feel that the school is well run. They are of the opinion that staff are approachable if they have any questions or concerns. However, a minority are unsure about the school's procedures for dealing with complaints. The majority feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. A small minority of parents feel that pupils do not behave well.

Responses to learner questionnaires

The majority of pupils in KS2 completed the questionnaire and were happy with their school. All feel safe at school. They think that they make good progress and know where to get help with any concern they may have about their work. The majority believe that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. They are all aware that they are supported well by teachers and other adults to make progress. The pupils believe that there are enough resources to enable them to learn well. However, a small minority feel that there are insufficient opportunities to get regular exercise. The majority feel that behaviour is good although a small minority believe that children do not behave well at playtime and lunch time.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Mr Gareth Wyn Jones	Reporting Inspector
Mr Phil Mostert	Team Inspector
Mr Meic Francis	Lay Inspector
Ms Catrin James	Peer Inspector
Mr Aeron Rees	School Nominee

Contractor: Cwmni Cynnal
Technology Unit
Bridge Street
Llangefni
Anglesey
LL77 7HL

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (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