



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 Gynradd Aberaeron
Wellington Gardens
Aberaeron
Ceredigion
SA46 0BQ**

Date of inspection: November 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 Gynradd Gymunedol Aberaeron serves the town and the nearby area in Ceredigion. Welsh is the main language of the school. There are 179 pupils on roll between 3 and 11 years of age, arranged into eight classes.

Seventeen per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. Five per cent of pupils come from an ethnic minority background. The area is neither privileged nor socially or economically disadvantaged and 5% of pupils receive free school meals. This is much lower than the local and national averages.

Twenty-five per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This is a little higher than the local and national averages. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher has been in post since 1998 and the two deputy headteachers since 2008. The school had its last inspection in 2005.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Aberaeron in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,019 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Ceredigion is £8,706 and the minimum is £2,987. Ysgol Gynradd Aberaeron is 59th out of the 60 primary schools in Ceredigion in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school has strengths that outweigh areas for improvement. The strengths include:

- nearly all pupils showing consistent understanding of their wellbeing, health and safety;
- robust consistency in terms of care, support and guidance;
- effective use of the learning environment; and
- useful partners supporting the work of the school.

The areas for improvement include:

- standards and skills of many pupils that are currently lower than the expected levels of attainment and achievement;
- planning that does not allow pupils to build systematically on information, understanding and skills as they move through the school;
- inconsistent response to pupils' work on paper; and
- lack of challenge in a number of lessons and, as a result, pupils not achieving at an appropriate level.

Prospects for improvement

Although the school has a new, energetic management team that works together effectively, the prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because:

- the school has not addressed some recommendations from the previous inspection;
- the recent strategic planning has not had time to establish itself in order to move the school forward; and
- although the self-evaluation process has been long established, the focus and targeting have not had the appropriate impact on raising pupils' standards over time.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise pupils' standards in the core subjects and their key skills, especially their extended writing and information technology skills across the curriculum;
- R2 continue to improve planning in order to challenge pupils consistently and differentiate effectively for them;
- R3 standardise the process of responding to pupils' work so that they understand how they can improve their work;
- R4 continue to implement strategic planning in order to ensure that the targets that arise from self-evaluation lead directly to raising pupils' standards; and
- R5 address the issue regarding health and safety.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan in order to show 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

The basic skills of approximately half the pupils on entry to the school are similar to the expected average. During their time at the school, most pupils make adequate progress and achievement considering their starting points.

The communication skills of most pupils are good in oral English, and they listen attentively, speak clearly and read purposefully in the language. They are not as good in Welsh. The advanced skills of extended reading and writing of most pupils in both languages are adequate. They do not respond appropriately to the range of reading materials consistently well and they do not write in an extended way effectively in other subjects across the curriculum. Most pupils' skills in drafting work have not developed appropriately for their age.

The mathematical skills of most pupils are satisfactory; however, they do not use their numeracy skills appropriately across the curriculum. The computer and technology skills of almost all pupils have not been established firmly. Most pupils are unsure when saving their work and when finding previous work on computers. The progress of almost all pupils in their Welsh language skills shows strengths that outweigh the areas for improvement.

Most pupils across the school develop useful wider skills; their independence as learners and the way in which they evaluate their own work and that of their peers are beginning to develop effectively. This new process is beginning to have a positive impact on their work. However, the quality of presentation of most pupils' written work is inconsistent across the curriculum.

In comparison with the situation in similar schools, the trends in the performance of seven-year-old pupils have been uneven over a period of five years. In key stage 2, the school tends to perform lower than the expected levels. The results have also varied in comparison with those of the family of similar schools, the local authority and the whole of Wales. The percentage of pupils attaining higher levels than expected are uneven in comparison with the situation in the other schools in the family, local authority and the whole of Wales. There are no obvious patterns of differences between the performance of boys in comparison with girls. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. It would be unfair to compare the attainments of pupils who are entitled to free school meals with those who are not entitled, as the numbers are too small to establish a clear pattern.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils are aware of the importance of health and fitness and they achieve well in their personal, social and cultural development. Almost all feel safe at school and know how to stay healthy by eating sensibly and improving their fitness through physical exercise lessons and activities.

Nearly all pupils are willing learners who enjoy school life. The majority enjoy their lessons and they voice sensible opinions about what they are learning. Behaviour is good and almost all pupils are courteous and respond respectfully to adults and peers. Ambassadors and older children show care and respect towards younger pupils and special needs pupils. Nearly all pupils are good at discussing entrepreneurship and the need to care for the environment and the diverse world in which they live.

The attendance rate, about 95%, is higher than the local and national averages. Nearly all of the pupils are punctual.

Members of the school council and the eco committee take an active part in school life by making sensible decisions. Pupils' extra-curricular work and their commitment to the town and the local community are good.

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

The school provides an appropriate range of learning experiences across the curriculum. Although there have been significant changes to the planning process recently, the new structure has not had sufficient time to influence improvement in pupils' standards in full. The latest planning across the school is beginning to address the requirements of the National Curriculum better.

In the Foundation Phase, the planning for developing the learning areas is effective. However, across the school, there is not enough detail and progression in the planning. As a result, the curriculum that is provided does not challenge and engender enough interest among the majority of pupils. There is inconsistency in planning that hinders opportunities for pupils to build systematically on information, understanding and skills as they move through the school.

The provision to ensure that pupils acquire literacy, communication and numeracy skills is adequate as the new systems that have been implemented recently have not had an appropriate amount of time to establish themselves. The provision for developing information technology skills is a very new system across the school and as yet is not having an appropriate impact on pupils' standards. The provision for developing independent learning skills and thinking skills is beginning to have appropriate attention and they are beginning to manifest themselves in daily school life and in pupils' work.

The school ensures that there is very effective provision to develop understanding of global citizenship issues. Joint worship is used appropriately to highlight issues concerning respect towards others and personal and social education. The provision for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is being developed effectively throughout the school.

Teaching: Adequate

Strengths in teaching outweigh the areas for improvement.

Where there is good teaching, resources are used effectively to support learning. There is a good working relationship between adults and pupils in every class. There is an industrious and happy ethos and a feeling of respect is evident in the classes. Questioning is good and it tries to extend the understanding of pupils in a positive learning environment. Pupils benefit from the fact that their teachers speak to them sensitively and with praise about the quality of their work. Teachers make sensible oral suggestions and give encouragement to pupils in order for them to improve their work.

Presentations and pace of lessons that are not as good are too slow and too long and there is not enough challenge for pupils. As a result, most pupils are overly dependent on the teacher's guidance, rather than thinking for themselves. The adults lead the learning too much, although they listen carefully to pupils' responses. In these lessons, teachers depend too much on worksheets, which limits opportunities for pupils to extend their work, their knowledge and their independence in learning.

The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, although good aspects can be seen. Where there are shortcomings, the marking does not show clearly the way ahead for pupils to improve their work. The process of setting useful targets for individual pupils is established throughout the school. They have a constructive impact on the work of most pupils. However, the differentiation for the developmental needs of pupils is not sufficiently detailed and clear. In addition, there is not enough challenge in order to move the pupils forward to achieve better.

All teaching staff, including support staff, use behaviour management strategies effectively.

Assessment for learning strategies are beginning to become established in the school's procedures. Success criteria are beginning to receive appropriate attention and are beginning to direct pupils as to how to improve their work. The system for levelling and moderating pupils' work over time identifies pupils' success levels accurately. However, this information is not used with sufficient consistency to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Reports to parents meet the statutory requirements, with appropriate information in place, including personal targets. On the whole, parents and carers feel that they receive suitable information about their children's progress at the end of the school year. However, they feel that most of the content in the reports is impersonal.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully. Good information is available to pupils and adults about school life, which includes a useful website, the school prospectus and the governors' annual report.

Induction arrangements for new pupils and pupils with special needs are clear and good arrangements are in place for transferring older pupils to secondary school. The well-organised provision for wellbeing and the advantages of living healthily are

promoted very clearly. National initiatives such as those on inclusion and equality are encouraged and supported very well.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

There are effective systems for identifying pupils who need extra support with their work. There is planned provision for each one of these pupils. The support is co-ordinated effectively and there are good links with specialist external agencies. Parents and carers are notified well and the individual education plans are evaluated and updated regularly. The effective procedures for reporting on additional learning needs meet statutory requirements.

Learning environment: Good

The school ensures equal opportunities for all pupils and it is a wholly inclusive community. All pupils are included regularly in the daily life and work of the school. This is very good practice and this positive attitude encourages the pupils to consider and appreciate their various backgrounds. The curriculum is accessible to all, whatever their gender, race or religion, and the school meets its statutory duties well.

The school uses the building and the grounds very effectively and they are well maintained. Support staff work effectively under guidance from class teachers. They succeed in presenting appropriate activities effectively across the school. The quality of resources is good and they are used with a purpose to support pupils' learning needs.

The governors were informed of an issue concerning health and safety that needs urgent attention.

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

The headteacher and the remainder of the staff work closely to create a whole-school ethos that encourages and places value on teamwork. The senior management team is comparatively new and includes the headteacher and two energetic deputy headteachers. The management team has presented a number of strategies to try to raise pupils' standards and provide a consistent curriculum across the school. However, the developments that are in place have not been sufficiently established as yet, and there is no impact on the standards of attainment or the quality of the curriculum.

Regular meetings and whole-day training support staff professional development well. Meetings are now used appropriately in order to move the school forward strategically. The staff have specific responsibilities to develop the school as a learning environment and they share practices usefully in order to try to improve their professional practices and pupils' standards.

The performance management systems are stable. The school supports performance management and implements the legal requirement to formally monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in every class as part of this process.

The school targets national and local priorities well, for example the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the green flag from the Eco Schools scheme. The school is an international one and it has four leaves from the Healthy Schools scheme. It operates as a fair trade school and has achieved the silver level of Investors in People. The Foundation Phase is implemented effectively for every pupil up to the age of seven.

The governors undertake their roles faithfully and they have appropriate interest in the day to day life of the school. They develop an adequate understanding of the way in which the school performs by listening to staff and visiting classes occasionally. The chair and the remainder of the governing body attend training and are beginning to challenge the school more as critical friends. They are beginning to handle the school's performance data better and to understand the obligations that they are under as they seek to create improvements.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation process is well established, but the procedures have not led to the raising of pupils' standards and to improving the quality of provision. The self-evaluation process is now more systematic and clear. All of the staff are more aware of the purpose and impact of effective self-evaluation. The managers and leaders are developing a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They now focus appropriately on raising pupils' standards and developing provision in classes further.

The school improvement plan, which arises from the recent self-evaluation, is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the school further. The focus of the plan targets specific areas and the use of data in tracking pupils' progress is beginning to challenge the school to raise standards.

The staff have been included in a series of good training and development opportunities. These include working in partnership with schools and other partners, which include the wider community, the education service and the local authority. Inconsistent progress has been made in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection concerning progression and continuity in planning teaching, developing the role of the governors and improving standards and presentation of work in key stage 2. The new management team is now beginning to address the aspects identified in the previous report effectively.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents, the community and others are good and almost all of the parents appreciate the school's 'open door' policy. The partnerships with local businesses are effective and some of them receive children on visits. This has a positive effect on the pupils' awareness of the world of work. The links between the cylch meithrin, which is situated in the school in the afternoons, and the school are

very effective. The transition plans between the school and the secondary school enable older pupils to be prepared appropriately for the next stage in their education.

Visits to the community and visitors from the community make positive contributions to enriching pupils' experiences. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is developed well through studies and links with other countries and continents. The school supports appropriate charities, which raises children's awareness of other people's needs effectively.

Resource management: Adequate

Staffing, resources and funding are managed well. Teachers have appropriate knowledge to introduce a broad curriculum. Support staff are used well and they work effectively alongside teachers to improve pupils' achievement in the classroom or on duties throughout the day.

Expenditure is linked clearly with priorities in the school improvement plan and managers monitor and manage expenditure well. Although much has been achieved recently, the strategic plan and development priorities have not had time to become established and affect pupils' standards, and planning and teaching.

Although there has been recent progress in a number of areas, because of the shortcomings in pupils' outcomes and in provision and leadership, the school is judged as providing adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Comments on performance data

The basic skills of about half the pupils on entry to the school are similar to the expected average. During their time in the school, most pupils make adequate progress and achievement, considering their starting points.

Trends in the performance of seven-year-old pupils attaining the core subject indicator, that is, level 2 or higher in a combination of the core subjects, have been uneven over a period of five years. They have varied between the top quarter and the bottom quarter in comparison with the results of schools that have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. In key stage 2, where level 4 or higher is the expected level, the school tends to fall into the third or fourth quarter in every subject and where subjects are combined. The results have also varied in comparison with those of the family of similar schools, the local authority and the whole of Wales in the core subject indicator, and also in the core subjects individually.

The school's data shows that the results of specific groups of pupils such as latecomers are good on the whole. However, by inspecting pupils' work and books, these results are not reflected consistently. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those who are more able and talented, are making good progress.

The percentage of pupils who reach higher levels than expected is uneven in comparison with the situation in other schools in the family, the local authority and the whole of Wales. There are no obvious patterns of difference between the performance of boys compared with girls. It would be unfair to compare the attainments of pupils who are entitled to free school meals with those who are not entitled as the numbers are too small to establish a clear pattern.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Up to 57 parents responded to the questionnaire. Everyone is of the opinion that help for their children to settle when starting school is good and that their children are encouraged to be healthy.

Nearly all say that their children like school, that the teaching is good, that the expectations of staff emphasise working hard, and that homework builds on the class work. In addition, nearly all are satisfied with the school in general, that their children are safe at school, and that the school promotes maturity and the shouldering of responsibilities.

Most feel that pupils behave well, that appropriate additional support is available for their children, that their children are ready to move on to their next school and that there is a good variety of activities, trips and visits available. In addition, most feel comfortable when contacting the school, that consistent information on their child's progress is available, that their child is making good progress, that the staff treat every child fairly and with respect and that the school is well run.

Many of the parents understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Eighty-five pupils responded to the questionnaire. All pupils believe that the school deals well with any bullying, that the school teaches them how to be healthy, that there are plenty of opportunities for physical exercise, that the teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress, and that they know with whom to speak if they find the work difficult.

Nearly all feel safe in school; they are of the opinion that they have plenty of resources, that behaviour is good at play time and at lunch time, that they are doing well, that they know with whom to speak if they are worried, and that homework helps their school work.

Many are of the opinion that other pupils behave well and that this enables them to continue with their work.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Nicholas Jones	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Gwyneth Hughes	Peer Inspector
Isabel Hind (Headteacher)	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

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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