



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 Rhydypennau
Bow Street
Ceredigion
SY24 5AD**

Date of inspection: June 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 Rhydypennau is situated in the village of Bow Street, some four miles to the north of Aberystwyth on the main road leading to Machynlleth. Welsh is the main language of the school's life and work and the aim is to ensure that pupils are completely bilingual by the time they transfer to the secondary sector.

At the time of the inspection, there were 188 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on the register in comparison with 192 at the time of the last inspection. There are seven classes in the school, including a nursery class, which has 25 pupils on the register. There are currently no pupils with English as an additional language. There are no pupils from an ethnic minority background in the school. About 19% of the pupils come from households where Welsh is the main language.

The area that the pupils come from is described as being one that is neither prosperous nor under economic disadvantage. Ten per cent of the pupils receive free school meals, which is lower than the national average.

Twenty-three per cent of the pupils were designated as having additional educational needs, including two pupils who have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2002.

The individual school budget per pupil in 2010-2011 for Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau is £3,258 in comparison with a maximum of £24,095 and a minimum of £2,741 for primary schools in Ceredigion. The school has the 46th highest budget per pupil of the 63 primary schools in Ceredigion.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau's current performance is good because:

- nearly every pupil makes good progress in their learning during their time in the school;
- most of the pupils respond well to motivation and show very positive attitudes to learning;
- the school plans interesting learning experiences that capture the pupils' interest; and
- there is a supportive ethos and an industrious atmosphere in every class.

Prospects for improvement

Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher conveys his vision clearly to the staff and the pupils;
- members of the governing body shoulder their responsibilities conscientiously;
- self-evaluation is core to the school's life and work; and
- there is a natural link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedure and the school improvement plan.

Recommendations

In order to improve further the school needs to:

R1 raise boys' writing standards in key stage 2;

R2 provide more opportunities for pupils to develop into independent learners; and

R3 further developments to the role of the school council and to the eco-council within the school.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school.

Most of the pupils make good progress in their Welsh language skills. They speak with increasing confidence and use the language at all times. They use correct verb forms and idioms of the language in an effective manner in their work. Most of the pupils in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 1 read at a level that is at least appropriate to their age and ability, and often higher. They make full use of their writing skills across the curriculum. In key stage 2, most of the pupils can read meaningfully and with good expression and many are writing to an appropriate standard.

The English language skills of most of the pupils in key stage 2 are very good. They speak confidently and read accurately with appropriate expression. Many write interestingly and extensively, using a wide range of media.

In general, the older boys' writing skills are not as good as those of the girls in Welsh or English.

The translanguaging skills of most are developing appropriately. Almost every pupil's knowledge of the history, geography, art and music of Wales is very good.

Pupils who are entitled to have free school meals make appropriate progress in both key stages, although the data suggests that older pupils are not doing as well compared with those of the other schools in the family.

The pupils who have additional educational needs make good progress according to their age and ability. The more able and talented pupils achieve well.

The results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 1 are consistently high and show a general upward trend. In 2010, the percentage of pupils who reached the expected level (level 2) was consistently considerably higher than the averages for the family of schools and Wales in Welsh, mathematics and science.

The percentage of seven-year-old pupils reaching a higher than expected level (level 3) over the last three years in mathematics and Welsh is consistently higher than the family and Wales averages. In science, the percentage is higher than the family average and similar to the average figure for Wales. In comparing the results of key stage 1 with those of similar schools across Wales from the point of view of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's results for the expected levels in Welsh, mathematics and science have varied between the highest quarter and the lower half over the past four years.

The results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2 also show an upward trend over the years. For two years the percentage reaching the core subject indicator (level 4 in a combination of the core subjects) has been higher than the averages for the family and Wales.

In 2010, the percentage that reached the higher than expected level (level 5) in Welsh, English, mathematics and science was considerably higher than the averages for the family and Wales.

When comparing the results for key stage 2 with those of similar school across Wales from the point of view of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's results for the expected level (level 4) in Welsh, English, mathematics and science have varied between the highest quarter and the lowest quarter over the last four years.

Wellbeing: Good

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

Pupils' behaviour across the school is very good. Pupils are polite and courteous, showing respect and care towards their peers and working conscientiously with one another. Nearly all of the pupils enjoy school and feel that they are being appreciated and supported. They respond well to motivation and show very positive attitudes towards learning.

The school has not had cause to exclude a pupil over the last three years.

The attendance percentage over the past three terms is on average a little above 95%, which is higher than the percentages for similar schools and for Wales as a whole.

The members of the school council and the eco council are enthusiastic and understand that they represent the views of other pupils within the school community. However, their roles within the councils are not defined and, as a result, they cannot hold their own meetings without the assistance of an adult.

The majority have mature attitudes, which are a good basis for further development of their social and life skills. They develop their confidence by taking part in a number of activities in the community and nationally such as the Urdd Eisteddfod and sports competitions.

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

Learning experiences: Good

The school plans interesting learning experiences that capture the pupils' interest across the school. The schemes of work are comprehensive and respond well to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Phase.

The planning for developing literacy, numeracy, communication and information technology skills is thorough. These skills are incorporated into the pupils' experiences across each subject and learning area. As a result, developing skills is a prominent part of daily lessons. However, the planning does not always allow sufficient opportunity for pupils to make decisions about their own learning in every class.

The provision for the Welsh language enables pupils to make very good progress. Effective provision is made for targeting specific groups such as pupils who are new to the school, where Welsh is their second language. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to learn about the history, geography, art and music of Wales.

The school also offers a wide range of interesting experiences to capture the pupils' interest in sustainability. The staff encourage pupils to be responsible citizens and to play an active part in the local community and within the global community. By studying other countries, and through the eco-council, opportunities are given for the pupils to collect for charities, recycle, use less energy, and buy fair trade goods.

Teaching: Good

The teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan a range of interesting activities to stimulate the pupils. There is very effective co-operation between teachers and ancillary staff across the school.

In the few excellent lessons, the pace is appropriate, interesting tasks set and probing questions asked. The teachers' expectations are high and usually they build on the pupils' previous experiences and challenge them. However, opportunities for pupils to work independently are inconsistent.

There is a supportive ethos and an industrious atmosphere in every class, and everyone is respected. There are very good examples of detailed marking in the pupils' books, which responds constructively to their work and helps them to understand how to develop it. The teachers enable pupils to identify targets for improvement effectively.

The school has effective assessment systems, which summarise pupils' progress. Teachers make appropriate use of this regime. A tracking system is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress through the school, including able pupils and those likely to underachieve by the end of the key stage. Reports to parents on their children's progress are comprehensive.

Assessment for learning strategies are core to the work of the school and have a prominent place in teachers' plans. Effective use is made of them in order to support pupils and raise standards.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy community that gives priority to the wellbeing and safety of pupils. It has comprehensive procedures and close and effective links with special and social services. Although the school encourages pupils to express opinions and

give ideas on how to improve the school, this aspect has not been sufficiently developed.

There is appropriate provision for pupils' spiritual development in joint worship sessions. The school promotes the moral and social development of all of its pupils daily through fostering values such as fairness and respect in every activity. Pupils are encouraged to be proud of their community and they are associated with a number of activities within that community. The learning experiences promote pupils' personal development well. The opportunities for developing sympathy with other cultures in order to understand the differences between people from different parts of the world are very effective. Pupils are very proud of their considerable support of different charities.

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

Appropriate policies are in place for additional learning needs and they are fully implemented. Effective arrangements exist to support all pupils who have been identified as having additional learning needs. The school has recognised more able and talented pupils and has provided appropriately for them.

Learning environment: Good

There is an inclusive ethos in the school. The caring community that exists among the headteacher and staff provides equal opportunities for the pupils for all of the school's activities. Emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

The school has plenty of resources of a high standard to satisfy the needs of the curriculum and the school makes efficient and appropriate use of them to support the teaching and learning. Classrooms and other internal areas are colourful and stimulating, and successfully celebrate the pupils' efforts. Appropriate use is made of these areas, including the garden, in order to enrich the pupils' experiences. The building and external areas are well maintained.

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

The headteacher conveys his vision clearly to the staff and pupils. This ensures that each member of staff understands their role in implementing the school's plans. The deputy headteacher shoulders a range of management responsibilities effectively, including taking responsibility for the curriculum, and operating as the co-ordinator for a number of subjects. The staff work very successfully as a team.

The members of the governing body are very supportive of the school and shoulder their responsibilities conscientiously. Governors are prepared to challenge when necessary and contribute very well to the self-evaluation process. Members of the body observe lessons, discuss with co-ordinators and receive reports on the school's performance before reporting back to the full governing body. They discuss data regularly, considering any trends in performance.

Appropriate attention is paid to national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase provision was established very successfully, ensuring appropriate resources that are excellently managed. Assessment for learning is now well rooted in lessons and contributes to raising standards.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is core to the school's life and work. Managers have a very successful procedure giving specific attention to every subject or aspect over a period of three years. Consideration is given to a range of information including data on standards and an analysis of trends over a period of time. Constant attention is given to evidence on the quality of teaching and learning through classroom observations, and appropriate arrangements were established to ascertain parents' and pupils' opinions through questionnaires. The headteacher also makes effective use of the local authority's monitoring reports.

There is a natural link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedure and the priorities of the school improvement plan. The annual improvement plans are of a very good quality and include appropriate strategies that identify tasks to be completed within suitable time periods. Responsibilities for co-ordinating the strategies identified have been allocated appropriately to various members of staff and have led to specific improvements in standards across the school. Leaders provide valuable opportunities for staff to benefit from continuing professional development. The procedures include an appraisal cycle leading to agreed goals, and include individual development needs in addition to priorities for improving the school. The school co-operates with nearby schools and has developed effective networks of professional practice. This has led to improvements in curriculum planning and valuable developments in the arrangements for children's welfare.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are strong and contribute effectively to achieving the school's goals. The school plays a prominent part within the local community. Pupils regularly visit various places in the village, and often welcome individuals from the community to speak to them at school. This makes a positive contribution to enriching their learning experiences and their awareness of their locality.

There is a very close link between the school and the cylch meithrin held in the school grounds, which facilitates arrangements for admitting pupils. In the same way, arrangements for transferring pupils to the local secondary school prepares the older pupils well for the next stage of their education. The school co-operates effectively with other primary schools in the area as well as with the secondary schools in order to plan resources and ensure the quality of assessments of the pupils' work.

There are strong links with the local authority and teacher training institutions, and the school regularly welcomes prospective teachers.

Resource management: Good

Leaders and managers manage the resources allocated to the school well, ensuring appropriate staffing arrangements to teach the curriculum effectively. There is a strong link between the school's priorities and expenditure decisions. Budget monitoring processes are good and give relevant consideration to the regular finance reports by the local authority's education service.

Appropriate arrangements are in place for appraising and managing the whole staff's performance. Effective use is made of the planning, preparation and assessment time available to the teachers. Staff expertise is used across the school in special areas such as physical education and music, which has a positive effect on standards in these areas. The school makes excellent use of classroom assistants. Their contribution to the Foundation Phase and in supporting pupils with additional learning needs is very valuable.

When considering pupils' outcomes and the use made of finances, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Pupils' questionnaires

All pupils say that they feel safe at school, that teachers and other adults help them to learn, and that they know what to do and to whom to turn if they find the work difficult, or if they are concerned or worried.

Nearly all feel that they are doing well in school and that there are many opportunities there for them to take physical exercise regularly.

Most of them feel that there are enough resources available in order for them to do their work, that the school deals well with any bullying and that the homework set helps them to understand their work at school. Most of them are also of the opinion that other children behave well in lessons so that they can do their work and almost all behave well at play time and lunch time.

Parents' questionnaires

Sixty-five questionnaires were returned from the parents.

Nearly all parents are satisfied with the school in general, claiming that their children like the school, that they feel safe there and that they had support to settle in well when they started there. Also, almost all are of the opinion that the pupils' behaviour is good, that their children are making good progress at school, that the teaching is good and that teachers have high expectations of the pupils. They also believe that the pupils are encouraged to be healthy and take regular physical exercise.

Nearly all of them feel that the school is well run, that they, as parents, receive regular information on their children's progress, and that the school helps their children to become more mature and to shoulder responsibilities. Also almost all of them believe that the school organises a good variety of activities, including journeys and visits, and that the work given builds well on what their children learn in school. Also, nearly all of them feel that their children are prepared well for moving on to the next school and that they receive appropriate additional support in terms of any specific individual needs.

Most of them feel comfortable about asking questions at school, making suggestions or raising a problem. They also feel that staff treat all children with respect and that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

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|------------------|---------------------|
| Huw Watkins | Reporting Inspector |
| Enir Rees Morgan | Team Inspector |
| Ruth Rhydderch | Lay Inspector |
| Tristan Roberts | Peer Inspector |
| Adrian Havard | 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 |