



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 Porth y Felin
Ffordd Llanrwst
Conwy
LL32 8FZ**

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 Porth y Felin is situated in Conwy in North Wales. Most pupils reside locally with a few pupils coming from the surrounding area. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and the school describes the area it serves as neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Currently, around 18.5% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is similar to local and national averages.

There are currently 286 full-time and 33 part-time pupils on roll organised into 13 classes. The school admits pupils to the nursery at the age of three. The classes are taught by 15 full-time and one part-time teacher supported by seven full-time and two part-time support staff. The school has one pupil who is "looked after" by the local authority. No pupils receive support for English as an additional language. Around 20% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. English is the predominant home language of almost all pupils. Four percent of pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.

The headteacher was appointed in 1998. The resource provision class funded by the local authority was not inspected.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Porth y Felin is £3,349 which compares with a maximum of £9,816 and a minimum of £2,909 for primary schools in Conwy. The school has the 46th highest budget per pupil out of the 61 primary schools in Conwy.

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall judgement for the schools' current performance is judged as adequate. Many pupils;

- make good progress in key stage 2;
- attain the expected level by the end of key stage 2; and
- achieve good standards of wellbeing.

However;

- pupils in key stage 1 make insufficient progress;
- provision for more able pupils is underdeveloped; and
- few of these pupils achieve or attain well enough.

Prospects for improvement

The overall judgement for prospects for improvement is adequate.

The school has a clear vision and is a well ordered and happy learning environment. It has made good progress in raising standards in Welsh, reading and information technology. However the school does not;

- do enough to challenge staff to improve the quality of their teaching or raise pupils' standards of achievement especially for the more able;
- have effective systems of self-evaluation;
- sufficiently prioritise improvements or evaluate their impact in terms of the standards pupils achieve; and has not
- addressed all the recommendations from the last inspection.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in key stage 1 and of more able pupils;
- R2 develop effective planning and teaching strategies so that learning activities provide appropriate challenge for all pupils;
- R3 improve the accuracy of assessment at the end of key stage 1;
- R4 establish a rigorous system of self-evaluation;
- R5 use results from self-evaluation to effectively prioritise areas for improvement;
and
- R6 ensure that the school meets statutory requirements in respect of the school prospectus and the 'Governors' Annual Report to Parents'.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Most pupils enter the school with levels of skills that are slightly above the average for the local authority and around that expected for their age. In the nursery class pupils make good progress but this is not consistently sustained and by the end of key stage 1 attainment is generally below that of the local authority and Wales. In key stage 2 most pupils make good progress and attain the expected level 4. However, in the majority of lessons many more able pupils do not make sufficient progress. Consequently, they fail to achieve the higher levels in the end of key stage assessments and this is an important shortcoming.

Key stage 1 pupils in receipt of free school meals do not perform as well as other pupils. In key stage 2 there is little difference in attainment between these groups. In the majority of classes girls perform better than boys especially in key stage 1. The difference in attainment is about the average for the school's family (those schools which face similar challenges).

Throughout the school most pupils demonstrate very good standards of speaking and listening, with many older pupils being very articulate and confident speakers. Most younger pupils read with appropriate fluency but are not confident when discussing characters or their favourite part of a story. Most older pupils read very well and many pupils in both key stages generally write well. The work of almost all is legible and well presented. However, more able pupils do not consistently demonstrate more advanced writing skills.

Standards of information and communication technology are very good across the whole school.

Most pupils, especially in key stage 1, have good standards of Welsh language. They use an appropriate range of language patterns, and respond confidently. However most pupils do not use Welsh consistently and progressively outside of Welsh lessons. Pupils whose first language is Welsh do not make sufficient progress.

In 2010, when compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, Ysgol Porth y Felin was in the lowest 25% for English and mathematics and in the lowest 50% for science. There has been a similar trend for the last four years.

Over the last four years, teacher assessment results for the expected level 2 in key stage 1 are below those of the school's family and show a downward trend. For the higher level 3 there is a similar pattern.

In 2010 end of key stage 2 assessments placed Ysgol Porth y Felin in the highest 25% of schools with a similar percentage of free school meals. There is a similar strong trend over the last four years.

In this period, teacher assessment results for the expected level 4 in key stage 2 are consistently above those of the school's family. Ysgol Porth y Felin is often one of the highest two performing schools. Results are improving especially for the core subject indicator.

However, for the higher level 5 the trend is generally below that of the family for English and mathematics. In science, level 5 results are falling rapidly and are currently the worst in the family.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' wellbeing is a strong feature of the school. All pupils feel valued in a secure and caring environment. They understand the reasons for eating healthily and the importance of physical exercise. For example, many pupils cycle to school following a successful 'Bike it' scheme promoted by the school council. Pupils work hard, contribute well in lessons and do their best, although they do not yet contribute fully to improving their own learning. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and most say that very little bullying occurs. Pupils show respect, care and concern for each other and relate very well to their teachers and other staff.

The school council is well established and members have a very strong understanding of their roles. They have been successful in promoting improvements in the school and the local community.

Pupils' attendance is consistently in the lower 50% of similar schools. Punctuality is good.

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

The school provides a broad and balanced range of learning experiences but this does not consistently meet the needs of all pupils. Learning experiences for less able pupils are good. However, planning for the more able does not build well enough on their existing levels of understanding or provide them with sufficient challenge to develop them as independent learners. Provision for numeracy is sound but does not always enable more able pupils work at higher levels especially in science in key stage 2. Foundation Phase staff too often give low level tasks to pupils working on their own.

Provision for information and communication technology, and speaking and listening are well developed. The school provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their reading. However older pupils have too few opportunities for extended writing. This and the over-use of worksheets limit pupils' progress.

There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be involved with the community. The school provides a wide range of well attended sporting, musical and cultural extra-curricular activities. These support the taught curriculum very well.

Welsh language provision for most pupils is good. Most adults speak Welsh regularly to pupils. Urdd activities contribute well towards the pupils' Welsh language development. There is very good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Wales through, for example, visits, Welsh artists and music. The school make insufficient provision for pupils whose first language is Welsh.

Effective links with a school in Norway, work with 'Action Aid' and in developing 'Fair Trade' status contribute well to developing pupil's knowledge and understanding of many aspects of sustainability and of both local and world-wide matters.

Teaching: Adequate

In all lessons observed staff and pupils have very strong working relationships based on mutual respect. This fosters a positive learning environment and contributes well to pupils' standards of achievement.

Where teaching is most effective lessons have good pace; staff have up-to-date subject knowledge and use an effective range of teaching strategies. They make strong use of praise and encouragement and manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. Support staff are actively involved in lessons and they make significant contributions to the quality of learning and the standards achieved by pupils.

Where there are short comings, teachers do not plan effectively to challenge more able pupils. There is insufficient expectation of what these pupils can achieve and this impacts negatively on the standards they attain.

Staff regularly mark pupils work but do not consistently provide sufficient feedback to pupils to help them understand how to improve their work. Few pupils regularly assess their own or others' work.

End of key stage 2 assessments are accurate and moderated well but there is some inconsistency in teacher assessment at the end of key stage 1. The school uses its own data well to identify pupils in need of additional support. The use of data to diagnose the next steps for pupils' learning is less well developed.

Parents/cares are regularly informed of their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has good procedures for supporting learners' health and wellbeing and to encourage their involvement in school life. It has effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strong links with St Mary's church and the high level of care provided by staff contribute well to pupils' wellbeing.

There is effective collaboration with a range of agencies, such as school nurse, police and the local authority services. This provides good support for pupils and staff. The majority of parents and carers feel able to approach staff for advice and guidance when required.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Staff diagnose learning difficulties early and provide pupils with appropriate and timely support. There are good links with specialist external support. Pupils' individual educational plans are appropriate and are regularly evaluated and updated. Their parents are well-informed and fully involved in the process.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a close, caring and happy community where all pupils are valued and diversity celebrated. There are good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils with disabilities do not receive less favourable treatment.

The school provides a wide range of good quality learning resources that are well-matched to pupils' needs. The building and grounds are maintained very well making a stimulating learning environment for the pupils. Throughout the school there are many colourful displays that promote and enrich pupils' learning.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors share the school's vision of a well ordered and happy school. This is reflected in the positive ethos evident throughout the school and by the high standards of pupils' behaviour.

Leaders and managers communicate priorities for improvement appropriately. As yet, they make limited use of data to monitor performance and do not consistently challenge staff to improve the quality of their teaching or raise standards of achievement especially for more able pupils. Performance management processes are in place with the majority of targets clearly linked to school needs.

Governors have a suitable knowledge of data and are well informed as to how the school operates on a day-to-day basis. As yet, they are not regularly involved in setting the strategic direction of the school or in challenging the school as a critical friend. Governors fail to ensure that the school's documentation meet statutory requirements.

The school is making appropriate progress in introducing the Foundation Phase but there is a very limited awareness of the School Effectiveness Framework and its implications.

Improving quality: Adequate

Over recent years the school has identified the need to raise standards in Welsh language, reading and information and communication technology and these have been successfully addressed.

Leaders and managers are appropriately involved in the preparation of the school's self-evaluation report prior to inspection and school development plan. The plan is a useful document that correctly identifies actions, costs and persons responsible for carrying out the improvements. However, the link between self evaluation and the current school improvement plan is limited and as a result priorities for improvement rarely focus on pupil outcomes or where change is most needed.

Self-evaluation is not based appropriately on the use of lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of data. The few elements in place lack rigour and do not draw sufficiently on first-hand evidence, especially on the quality of teaching and learning. This limits pupils' progress and attainment, especially for more able pupils.

The school has not fully met the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

Staff are not yet involved in networks of professional practice and this limits the school's capacity for self-improvement.

Partnership working: Good

A good range of partnership exists with the local community that effectively support pupils' wellbeing and learning. Strong links with the local nursery school help pupils to settle quickly at Ysgol Porth y Felin. Transfer arrangements agreed upon by the cluster of schools and the secondary school enable older pupils to be appropriately prepared for their next stage of their education. Visits to and from the community make a positive contribution to enriching pupils experiences including the creation of family learning groups.

There are good links with teacher training institutions and local colleges for further education that successfully help develop staff and pupils. Many parents comment positively about the opportunity to be involved in the life of the school and the information they receive.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has sufficient qualified teachers and support staff. These are deployed well but the training they receive is not always linked clearly to school priorities. Senior leaders and the governing body manage the school's budget and resources well and keep spending under review appropriately. The school's investment in information technology resources and the library has led to a significant improvement in pupils' performance

Provision for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time and the workload agreement is well organised. Teachers make effective use of these opportunities.

Shortcomings in pupil attainment in key stage 1, provision for the more able pupils, and in leadership and management result in the school providing adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Seventy-three key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. Nearly all responded very positively about the school and state that they feel safe, secure and well cared for. There was very high agreement from the pupils that they are doing well; that staff help them to make progress; there is someone to ask if they were stuck or need help; and they have lots of opportunities to take exercise. Most pupils feel homework is supportive and they have enough resources to do their work.

A few girls do not agree that pupils are well behaved in class and at break times or that the school deals well with any bullying.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixty parents responded to the questionnaires.

Most think that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their child likes school;
- their child settled well into school;
- their child is making good progress;
- pupils behave well;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect their children to work hard;
- children are safe in school;
- the school develops their child's sense of responsibility well; and
- the school is well run.

Many parents believe that:

- homework builds well on work in lessons;
- staff treat pupils fairly and with respect;
- support for children with additional learning needs is appropriate;
- they are comfortable approaching the school with any issues;
- their child is well prepared for the next stage of their education; and
- the school has a good range of trips and visits.

A minority of parents were concerned about;

- the information they receive; and
- the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Richard Hawkley	Reporting Inspector
Lowri Haf Evans	Team Inspector
Kerry Jones	Lay Inspector
Annwen Watkins	Peer Inspector
Dilwyn Grffiths (Headteacher)	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