



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 y Fro
Llangyndeyrn
Kidwelly
SA17 5BW**

Date of inspection: March 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 y Fro is a federal school that serves a rural area south of the town of Carmarthen. The school is located on two sites in the villages of Llangyndeyrn and Idole. It is managed by one governing body and one headteacher. Up until 2009, there was another site, in the village of Llansaint, that formed part of the federation, but this site has since closed. The pupils in the Foundation Phase and key stage 1 are taught on the Llangyndeyrn site and key stage 2 pupils are taught on the Idole site. Pupils from both sites meet every Friday.

Children are admitted into the school at the beginning of the term in which they reach their fourth birthday. Currently, there are five children of nursery age in the school. During the inspection, there were 51 pupils in the school.

The catchment area is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Currently, approximately 9% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has pupils of the full range of ability. Fifteen per cent of the pupils are on the Special Educational Needs Register.

Welsh is the everyday language for activities in Ysgol y Fro and is the main medium of teaching. Approximately half the pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. In key stage 1, all of the curriculum subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh, and English is introduced gradually during key stage 2.

The school was last inspected in 2005. The current acting headteacher has been in post for three years.

In 2010-2011, the individual school budget for Ysgol y Fro is £4,316 per pupil, which compares with a maximum of £17,415 and a minimum of £3,014 for primary schools in Carmarthenshire. The school has the 26th highest budget per pupil of the 114 primary schools in Carmarthenshire.

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 of the pupils make good progress in learning;
- the school's performance in terms of teachers' assessments compares favourably with that of the family of schools average;
- most pupils are very confident when communicating orally;
- there is a good relationship between teachers and pupils; and
- where the teaching is at its best, pupils are challenged to reach their full potential.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- all members of staff and leaders of the school share the same vision;
- the school has a successful history of implementing change;
- the school has a comprehensive system of self-evaluation that, in general, identifies appropriate elements for development; and
- everyone who is associated with the school is keen to raise pupils' standards of work.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise pupils' standards of writing across the curriculum;
- R2 provide activities that enable all pupils to succeed to the best of their ability;
- R3 ensure that the best teaching and assessment practices are disseminated throughout the school; and
- R4 develop the role of the governors to be more challenging and active in the self-evaluation process.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations. As some shortcomings have been identified in important areas, the local authority will monitor the implementation of the plan and report to Estyn on the progress made.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Almost all the pupils make appropriate progress in learning during their period in the school.

Pupils' oral ability is good. They can discuss various subjects very effectively in Welsh and English, using extensive vocabulary. Most pupils read at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability. However, the comprehension work of the majority of pupils across the curriculum does not match their age and ability, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are of a high standard.

The standards and progress of pupils in the Foundation Phase and in Year 2 are consistently good. The children apply themselves enthusiastically to their activities and achieve their tasks successfully. Pupils' achievement and progress in key stage 2 are inconsistent, and a minority of pupils do not work to the best of their ability.

The number of pupils in the cohort to be assessed at the end of a key stage varies from year to year which means that, at times, the results of one pupil can have a significant influence on the performance of the cohort.

In 2010, the results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 1 were 100% across all subjects. This is significant progress on the results of previous years, particularly in mathematics and Welsh, and is higher than the average performance of the family of schools, the local authority and Wales. Over the previous three years, the school's results were lower than the averages for the family of schools, the local authority and Wales. When compared with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the school was in the lowest quarter in Welsh and the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) for the two years preceding 2010, and in the lowest quarter in mathematics for one of the previous three years.

No performance data for the end of key stage 2 is available for 2010 as there were no pupils in Year 6. During the preceding three years, the school's results were consistently above the averages for the family of schools, the local authority and Wales, with the exception of 2008, when the results for the school were generally slightly lower than the average for the family of schools. For the three years up to 2009, when compared with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the school was consistently in the highest quarter in science whilst its performance in Welsh, English and mathematics varied between the highest and lowest quarters.

The number of pupils that achieve above the expected level, namely level 3 at the end of key stage 1 and level 5 at the end of key stage 2, is consistently higher than

the averages for the family of schools, the local authority and Wales. However, the work of pupils that was examined during the inspection does not reflect this fully.

There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in the school, over a four-year period.

Pupils with additional learning needs make progress but not all of them reach the standards that are appropriate to their ability and attainment.

Pupils make very good progress in their use of Welsh. Most of the pupils are able to speak Welsh fluently and effectively on every occasion, formally and informally.

Wellbeing: Good

In general, pupils develop into rounded and diligent individuals who are willing to contribute to the work of the school within their classes and in community activities.

They have a good awareness that eating healthily and fitness contribute to being healthy in body and in mind.

All pupils show great respect to each other, and the older pupils look after the younger ones at playtimes. The pupils are proud of their school and of the close community within it. All of the pupils state that they feel safe in the school.

In general, pupils' attitudes towards learning are positive. They take responsibility for their own learning and work together effectively in their lessons and activities.

Attendance for the school year 2009-2010 was 95% for children of compulsory school age which places the school in the top 50% of similar schools on the basis of entitlement to free school meals. There were no unauthorised absences during the year 2009-2010. Pupils arrive punctually at school and the learning sessions.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are courteous to each other and to adults at all times. The majority of pupils participate in extra-curricular activities, such as a weekly sports club and Urdd activities.

The school council and the eco-council are active and deal with a range of matters, and have links with the governing body and other school councils in the area. Pupils foster a good understanding of elements such as Fair Trade, and initiatives such as the campaign to reduce and recycle waste have raised pupils' awareness of matters relating to the local community.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The schemes of work provide a range of learning activities which meets pupils' needs. The 'Buddies' reading system, in which the older children help younger pupils

achieve good work in key stage 2, helps to raise reading standards. The support for developing reading in the Foundation Phase and Year 2 is strong.

There are opportunities for key stage 2 pupils to write extendedly but there is not sufficient differentiation in the tasks to meet the needs of specific individuals. An overdependence on worksheets limits pupils' ability to develop their writing skills further. Cross-curricular opportunities for numeracy work are scarce. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to use various information and communication technology equipment.

Various experiences are used as a means of providing a focus to develop a full range of skills in the Foundation Phase, but the outside area is not used to its full potential as an extension of work in the classroom. In key stage 2, the school provides valuable opportunities to develop the full range of key skills when studying interesting themes such as the Celts and 'Saving the Valley' and when undertaking a challenging project to design a racing car.

Prominence is given to education about sustainability and global citizenship. The eco-council meets regularly to discuss specific matters and to draw up a development plan. Eco activities are woven into curricular plans in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 1.

The school ensures that pupils become familiar with the circumstances, practices and traditions of different countries. There are appropriate opportunities to study places such as Tanzania and Botswana and to undertake activities that promote Fair Trade.

Teaching: Adequate

Teachers plan a variety of interesting activities to improve pupils' skills and to engender their interest. The lesson plans are clear, and effective use is made of teaching support staff. All members of staff, including teaching support staff, model language well and use behaviour management strategies effectively to keep pupils to the task in question. The teachers succeed in creating a purposeful learning atmosphere in which praise is used effectively to support pupils.

All the teachers create a close, good-natured relationship with the children through effective discussion and intelligent and purposeful questioning. Every child is included in the lesson and the staff ensure that the children know the nature of the task and the expectations.

The teaching in the lessons that were observed was inconsistent. Where the teaching is good, the success criteria are shared and opportunities are provided for the children to assess each other's performance in a structured way. Most of the teachers prepare thoroughly, using a variety of resources. They question the pupils purposefully and elicit intelligent responses from them.

In cases in which the teaching is adequate, the tasks are not sufficiently differentiated, the pace of the lesson is slow and the activities are not sufficiently challenging.

The teachers make positive comments about the children's work but they are not consistent in terms of making recommendations on how to improve their learning. The linguistic targets are set at the beginning of the year at the front of the book and there is evidence that a minority of pupils revisit their targets and appraise their progress. However, this is not a practice that is undertaken by every pupil.

The teachers assess pupils' attainment regularly and analyse the outcomes to track progress. The county tracking system is used to monitor pupils' progress but there is little evidence to indicate that this information is used to forward plan and to target specific areas to be developed and improved.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes pupils' health and wellbeing well. Pupils' health and fitness is promoted by a number of sports clubs and a daily fruit shop. The school has succeeded in gaining two leaves in the Healthy Schools scheme. The school has also been involved in the PESS physical education programme and has prepared a dance about pirates which will be shown to other schools as part of the county's training programme.

The pupils accept numerous responsibilities in the life of the school and fulfil their duties conscientiously and effectively. The school is an important part of its community and supports a large number of local cultural and social activities well.

Pupils and parents testify that there are no problems with bullying. Pupils turn confidently to teachers, the school's assistants and support staff for support and guidance.

The school's staff work effectively with other professional agencies, such as the language and speech therapist, the school nurse and the educational psychologist and take advantage of their expertise in order to promote pupils' wellbeing.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures and procedures for safeguarding. Pupils' responses, both in the questionnaire and orally, show that they are very happy in the school and feel safe there. Every pupil is given equal opportunities to develop socially.

The school has effective systems to identify children with special educational needs. Good support is provided by assistants and the special educational needs teacher to individuals, mainly for English. Key stage 2 pupils are taken out of their class to undertake work designated for them in their individual education plans. However, on a day-to-day basis, the class teachers do not take sufficient responsibility when planning specific tasks for these pupils.

Learning environment: Good

There is an inclusive ethos in this school and every pupil has the opportunity to participate in every activity. There are equality and anti-bullying policies in place and the 'Buddies' scheme is crucial from the standpoint of revealing any problems that

may arise. The pupils are aware of diversity and there are resources available to them that reflect differences between cultures.

The buildings are in a good condition and the displays are colourful and attractive, and create a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere at both sites. The school has good and numerous resources for developing all the areas of learning.

A good effort is made to give a sense of being one school, by holding joint assemblies and school council meetings, and there is very good communication between all members of staff.

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

The headteacher has succeeded in sharing her vision with the other members of staff effectively. They work diligently as a team together with the governors to create and implement strategies for unifying the school. The headteacher and governors have set the aims of acting as one school and responding fully to pupils' needs. However, the strategies are not sufficiently focused on raising standards.

All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and they work closely with each other to create a stimulating and homely ethos for the pupils. The school has a wide range of appropriate procedures and policies.

The governing body has good information about the school. It receives regular reports from the headteacher and discusses the contents in detail. The governors are aware of the strengths and the areas for development, but they acknowledge that they must be more challenging and take a more prominent role in the school's self-evaluation process.

The school gives due attention to national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase provision has been established effectively with a relevant balance between the focused tasks and activities of the children's choosing.

Constructive and regular links exist with other local schools within the Bro Myrddin primary cluster and beyond to share good practice to develop learning and teaching.

Improving quality: Good

The school has thorough arrangements for monitoring the provision. There are procedures in place to observe lessons, to examine children's work, to talk to pupils and to question members of staff. The information is recorded effectively and transferred to the self-evaluation report. The report is comprehensive and evaluative and gives due attention to the school's strengths and, in general, to those aspects which require further attention.

All members of staff play a part in creating the self-evaluation report and the pupils have an input through the School Council and questionnaires. Parent questionnaires are used in order to receive comments from them and these are given full

consideration. Although the report is discussed by governors, they do not have the opportunity to influence the contents of the report sufficiently or to set priorities. The outcomes of the self-evaluation process form the foundation for the priorities that are included in the school development plan.

The school has professional development arrangements that are relevant to the needs of individual members of staff and which, from time to time, are linked to priorities within the development plan.

The school has an appropriate system of managing staff performance, including support staff, which provides opportunities for continuous professional development.

The school succeeded in responding fully to the recommendations of the last inspection.

The school continues to develop the element of internal networking by sharing good practices in teaching, moderating work and discussing and suggesting developments for improving the learning and teaching. It also works with the schools in the catchment area and the family of schools to plan and implement developments.

Partnership working: Good

There are effective partnerships with parents and carers. There are good transition arrangements in place with the local nursery that meets in a room in the school.

There are good links and purposeful transition arrangements with the secondary school, and a number of effective activities have been arranged. Suitable standardisation and moderating work takes place in the core subjects.

The school has a strong partnership with local businesses and the local community. It took advantage of the support of a local business during the successful project to design a racing car. Visits to local places are part of the curriculum and members of the community visit the school regularly in order to share their experiences with pupils. Pupils take part in various local events such as eisteddfodau, shows, services and concerts. This close relationship enriches pupils' experiences very effectively.

The school works closely and effectively with the services that are provided by the local authority.

Resource management: Good

The school has sufficient suitably-qualified staff to undertake their work effectively. The school staff have worked assiduously to unify the school. The feeling of working as one school has been created and support has been received from all stakeholders. The governing body manages the budget appropriately. Purposeful resources are secured in order to meet the needs of maintaining a school on two sites. The expenditure of reserves is linked to the priorities of the School Development Plan. The school provides good value for money in terms of pupils' outcomes and its use of funding.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Responses to the questionnaire were received from 21 key stage 2 pupils. Every pupil feels safe in the school and they know whom to turn to if they need help with their work. Every pupil believes that they are doing well in the school and that teachers and other members of staff help them to learn and make progress. Every pupil believes that the homework helps them to understand and improve their work and that other children behave well during lessons. All the pupils believe that there are sufficient purposeful resources, including computers, in the school for them to do their work. They also believe that the school deals well with any cases of bullying and almost everyone knows whom to turn to if they are concerned or worried. They believe that the school teaches them how to stay healthy and provides many regular opportunities for them to have physical exercise. Almost all the pupils believe that other children in the school behave well during playtime and lunchtime.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Responses to the questionnaire were received from 17 people. Almost all of them are generally satisfied with the school and believe that their children enjoy the school and are safe there. Most of them state that the school is well run. Almost all of them believe that their children are making good progress in the school after having support to settle in well. They believe that the teaching is good and that the teachers and school staff expect the pupils to work hard and to do their best. The majority of parents feel that they receive regular information about their children's progress and that the homework that is set builds well on what pupils have learnt in the school. Almost all the parents feel that pupils receive good support according to their needs, and feel comfortable about asking questions and making suggestions to the school. They feel that the school helps their children in becoming more mature and to shoulder responsibilities. In the opinion of almost all the parents, the school encourages their children to be healthy and to do physical exercise regularly. They believe that there are a good variety of activities, including educational visits. About half the parents feel that they do not know how effectively the school prepares pupils for moving on to the secondary school.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Glyn Roberts	Team Inspector
Eirian Myfanwy Youngman	Lay Inspector
Marc Jones	Peer Inspector
Jayne Brodrick	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