



*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 Aberporth  
Aberporth  
Ceredigion  
SA43 2DE**

**Date of inspection: May 2013**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

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## Context

Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Aberporth is situated on the Ceredigion coast in the village of Aberporth, approximately seven miles north of Cardigan. The school serves the local community and the surrounding area. The school describes its catchment area as being deprived, which has now been identified as an area which is entitled to support from Flying Start. The school admits pupils to the reception class on a full-time basis at the beginning of the term following their fourth birthday. The school is a designated Welsh-medium school.

There are 122 pupils on roll, including pupils of Canolfan y Don, which is a unit for pupils with profound special educational needs. Twenty-two per cent of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes; however, approximately 12% come from backgrounds where Welsh is either the main or only language spoken at home. Currently, there are very few pupils at the school from ethnic minority backgrounds. Twenty-four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is slightly higher than the national average.

Approximately 31% of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs (ALN) register, which is higher than the average for schools in Wales. Nine children have a statement of special educational needs.

The school was last inspected in June 2007. Following an unstable period in terms of the school's leadership, the teacher in charge and acting assistant headteacher have been in post since April 2013.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Aberporth in 2012-2013 is £4,100. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Ceredigion is £12,284 and the minimum is £2,820. Ysgol Gynradd Aberporth is in 28th place out of the 58 primary schools in Ceredigion in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

Ysgol Aberporth's current performance is good because:

- achievement in language and communication in Welsh at the end of the Foundation Phase compares very favourably with that in similar schools;
- pupils who attend Canolfan y Don make good progress against their targets and are included in all aspects of school life;
- support for pupils with additional learning needs is good;
- members of the school council work well together when making decisions and represent pupils' views thoughtfully.

### Prospects for improvement

Ysgol Aberporth's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- within a relatively short period of time, the teacher in charge and new senior management team have provided firm leadership;
- leaders place a suitable emphasis on raising standards, inclusion and pupils' wellbeing;
- the governing body works well with the authority to ensure that the leadership is strengthened; and
- the self-evaluation report is comprehensive and celebrates some of the school's strengths and identifies some areas for development correctly.

However:

- the school does not have a clear, agreed vision;
- recent arrangements have not had enough time to have a full effect on aspects of school life;
- the role of the governing body as a critical friend and its ability to hold the school to account for standards have not been developed fully; and
- the school does not communicate effectively enough with parents.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure that the school's provision responds in full to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the county's agreed syllabus for religious education
- R2 Monitor new plans to ensure that numeracy and ICT skills develop successfully across the curriculum
- R3 Stabilise the school's leadership and develop the management team's strategic responsibilities
- R4 Strengthen the school's self-evaluation arrangements to ensure that they better identify strengths and required improvements
- R5 Develop the role of the governing body as critical friends
- R6 Strengthen the partnership with parents, with a particular focus on improving communication

### **What happens next?**

Ysgol Gynradd Aberporth will draw up an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Most pupils at Ysgol Aberporth make good progress in their learning during their time at school. On the whole, pupils across the school listen carefully and contribute enthusiastically in lessons. Nearly all pupils work well in pairs and in groups, and contribute effectively to discussions.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils communicate successfully in Welsh and use vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic. By the end of the Foundation Phase, they become increasingly confident when discussing their work, using a sound and clear syntax. Considering their linguistic background, their oral skills develop quickly. These develop further in key stage 2, with the best speaking confidently and maturely in both formal and informal situations. Nearly all pupils communicate successfully in English and discuss their ideas meaningfully.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils read books with expression, using a range of reading strategies to read unfamiliar words effectively. By the end of Year 2, they are able to discuss contents meaningfully, and refer to events in the book. Most pupils make good progress in their writing. They can write for different purposes and audiences, and spell and punctuate their work appropriately in line with their age and ability.

The eldest pupils at the school read a range of materials effectively in order to gather information in both languages. Most pupils read with fluency and expression in English. However, a few pupils' reading skills have not developed to the same extent in Welsh. The reading skills of pupils who receive support through intervention programmes are developing well. In general, pupils in key stage 2 are able to write in different forms and across a range of subjects, but this is not consistent across classes. Most pupils punctuate their work correctly. By Year 6, many are able to write at length, with the best using a wider vocabulary to create effects in both languages.

Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developing well. However, information and communication technology (ICT) skills have not developed consistently across the school.

Pupils who attend Canolfan y Don make good progress against their targets. Pupils listen and concentrate well within their ability. All pupils show enthusiasm towards activities. Although most pupils' attainment levels are low, pupils show good progress in their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The translanguaging skills of a very few pupils are good when they are reading and discussing text in both languages.

Pupils who attend Canolfan y Don make good progress against their targets.

In general, pupils' initial assessments on admission to the school show low linguistic and mathematical skills. At the end of the Foundation Phase, achievements at the expected outcome (outcome 5) compare favourably with those in similar schools in all aspects, except for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. The school's performance in this learning area places it in the lowest 25% of similar schools in terms of level of entitlement to free school meals. Pupils' achievements at outcome 5 and 6 in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh place the school among the top 25% of similar schools. When the outcomes of pupils at Canolfan y Don are removed from this data, the school's performance generally places it among the top 25% or 50% in all learning areas in comparison with similar schools.

In 2012, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 was good. However, over the previous three years, the school was placed in the lower 50% in all core subjects in comparison with similar schools in terms of levels of entitlement to free school meals. However, when the outcomes of pupils at Canolfan y Don are removed from this data, the school's performance over the last three years has placed the school consistently in the top 50% in comparison with similar schools. Although there has been a significant increase in the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4+ in Welsh over the last three years, in general, the school's performance remains in the lower 50% overall in comparison with that of similar schools. Pupils' achievements at the higher level (level 5+) vary and compare less favourably.

In general, there is no significant gap between the performance of boys and girls at the end of the Foundation Phase. Over a period of time, boys at the end of key stage 2 achieve better than girls at the higher levels (level 5+) in mathematics and science.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils' personal, social and life skills are developing successfully and prepare them suitably for the next stage in their education. Pupils at Canolfan y Don make good progress in their social skills.

Most pupils show a good awareness and the effect of activities relating to fitness and wellbeing. Nearly all pupils understand the need to undertake regular exercise and eat healthily. In general, pupils feel safe at school and are aware of whom they can approach if they need advice.

Most pupils show interest and motivation in their learning. Many work independently, but this is not consistent across the school.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour is good in the classroom and during lunch and break times. Nearly all pupils are polite and treat each other with respect.

Members of the school council work together effectively to make decisions and represent pupils' views thoughtfully. Most pupils take on responsibilities very conscientiously both within the school and beyond, through community activities. An example of this is the coffee afternoon which is held with the elderly each half term. There is a very strong link between Canolfan y Don and the community.

Pupils' attendance has improved over the last three years and compares favourably with that of similar schools. Most pupils arrive at school punctually.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The school offers a variety of learning experiences for pupils, which meet most of the requirements of the National Curriculum and principles of the Foundation Phase. The school does not respond fully to the expectations of the county's agreed syllabus for religious education.

On the whole, planning meets pupils' needs and motivates them appropriately. Pupils in the Foundation Phase contribute effectively towards their learning. As a result, most pupils make good progress.

Recent plans identify opportunities to develop skills across the curriculum. However, they have not had enough time to have a full effect across a range of subjects. Numeracy and ICT skills have not developed successfully enough.

The school has effective provision for supporting pupils who require additional support to develop literacy and numeracy skills through intervention programmes. These programmes have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes.

A variety of activities are offered to enrich the curriculum, including visits to institutions such as the National Library, Castell Henllys and Llain residential centre. Pupils have benefitted from opportunities to compete in a number of different Urdd competitions.

Provision for Welsh and the Welsh dimension is successful. The school's plans appropriately for the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and offers valuable experiences that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the features and culture of the local area and Wales. One example of this is the visits to Castell Henllys and Carew Castle.

Due attention is given to eco aspects and global citizenship in the school's curriculum through links with foreign countries.

### **Teaching: Good**

In general, teaching across the curriculum is sound. Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies successfully. Teachers have suitable subject knowledge and they build effectively upon pupils' previous knowledge. Teaching and support are focussed clearly, and challenging questioning responds to most pupils' needs. All teachers are good language models.

Assessment for learning strategies are developing appropriately across the school. Teachers plan lessons with clear aims and objectives. Objectives are shared carefully with pupils at the beginning of the lessons, and they refer regularly to success criteria as the lesson develops. In general, feedback given to pupils is



constructive and offers steps to be developed. This, in addition to individual targets, enables pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to these comments.

The school is beginning to use a suitable range of assessment materials effectively to create a clear picture of strengths and issues requiring further development. The school make appropriate use of the electronic tracking system for all pupils at the school; however, it is in the early days of its development.

Assessment arrangements in Canolfan y Don identify pupils' progress against their targets effectively. Good use is made of these results to plan further detailed teaching.

Information given to parents does not give them a clear enough picture of their children's progress.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school's inclusive and homely ethos promotes the health and wellbeing of pupils at Ysgol Aberporth very successfully. The school has effective procedures for supporting vulnerable pupils and promoting positive behaviour. Full use is made of specialist agencies to support and lead pupils and staff. Provision for pupils at Canolfan y Don is good and responds fully to their profound needs. The school makes suitable use of external expertise along with the effective support of assistants to ensure high quality support for all pupils.

A caring relationship exists between teachers and their pupils and a supportive ethos is apparent in the classrooms. This ensures that most pupils are motivated and show an interest in their learning.

Provision for additional learning needs across the school is good. The school has effective systems for identifying pupils' learning needs, and they respond to their needs promptly. As a result, the school ensures a high level of support and assistance for its pupils. The school has implemented a number of intervention programmes and, through careful monitoring, these pupils make good progress against their targets. However, provision for more able and talented pupils has not been developed fully.

Individual education plans are detailed and of a good quality. The school arranges regular meetings to review plans, and pupils, parents and carers are included appropriately in the process. Pupils who are integrated into the mainstream are given very good support and their needs are satisfied well.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately through regular collective worship sessions and opportunities for pupils to reflect quietly.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory requirements and are not a cause for concern.

## **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a close-knit, inclusive and caring community and, as a result, pupils are happy and safe. The school ensures equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils at Canolfan y Don are included effectively in all aspects of school life. Staff succeed in fostering positive attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils.

In general, the learning environment is of good quality. Recent adaptations made to the building have contributed towards ensuring access for all pupils. There are colourful and stimulating displays to support teaching and learning. The school has extensive outdoor areas; however, these have not been developed to their full potential, particularly for the Foundation Phase.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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## **Leadership: Adequate**

In a relatively short space of time, the teacher in charge and the new senior management team have provided firm leadership. They have given suitable priority to getting staff to work together as a team, with a suitable emphasis on raising standards, inclusion and pupils' wellbeing. However, the school has not yet developed a clear, agreed vision.

The school now has an appropriate range of expected policies and the senior management team ensures that these are implemented. Recently, a new staffing structure has been formed and all staff have responsibilities and clear job descriptions. However, recent developments have not had enough time to have a full effect on all aspects of school life.

The governing body works well with the authority to strengthen the leadership. However, the body was too slow in ensuring a sense of direction for the school. Members of the governing body have begun to visit the school to observe lessons as part of the school's self-evaluation process, and this assists them in getting first-hand experience of the school's standards. However, their role as critical friends and their ability to hold the school to account for standards have not developed fully.

The school gives appropriate attention to national priorities, and ensures that the school development plan focuses firmly on raising standards of literacy and numeracy. Through effective intervention programmes, the school gives suitable attention to elements of deprivation. On the whole, the principles of the Foundation Phase and pupils' wellbeing are given due attention.

## **Improving quality: Adequate**

The self-evaluation report is comprehensive and celebrates some of the school's strengths, in addition to identifying some issues that need to be developed. However, it is not evaluative enough and, as a result, it does not identify accurately enough the full range of issues requiring attention. Arrangements now give appropriate consideration to the opinions of parents and pupils.

Some of the teaching staff scrutinise pupils' work, analyse data, observe lessons and prepare reports. On the whole, reports identify strengths and areas for development appropriately; however the quality of evaluations varies, and are not given appropriate consideration in the school's self-evaluation report. The governing body was not given an opportunity to agree or challenge the accuracy of the report.

There are clear links between the self-evaluation report and the priorities in the school development plan. The development plan refers appropriately to some quantitative targets, the steps to be taken and success criteria. It also identifies timescales and responsibilities appropriately and outlines suitable monitoring and budgeting arrangements. However, the plan has not set clear targets for important issues that need to be improved at the school, such as adapting plans to ensure development in skills and a number of aspects relating to leadership.

The school has addressed some aspects of the School Effectiveness Framework by establishing an internal professional learning community, which has had a positive effect on integrating pupils from Canolfan y Don into the mainstream.

### **Partnership working: Adequate**

The school works successfully with a number of partnerships, including the world of business and the local authority, to expand provision and contribute towards enriching pupils' experiences. This work also helps to raise pupils' standards and to develop elements of leadership. The links with a number of Christian leaders contributes well towards pupils' spiritual development and creates a sense of belonging to the community.

In general, there are good links with the two pre-school providers that feed the school. This facilitates a smooth transition for pupils to the reception class. Successful transition arrangements also exist between the school and the local secondary school, which prepare older pupils well for the next step in their education.

The school works well with another school to share good practice in special educational needs. As a result, Canolfan y Don has benefitted from being able to develop the Foundation Phase areas and the playground in order to improve the children's physical skills. Co-operation arrangements for standardising pupils' work in the Llandysul and Cardigan district are effective. This has raised teachers' confidence and contributed towards ensuring that pupils' work is levelled appropriately.

There are supportive partnerships between Canolfan y Don, parents and the community. The Centre has useful links with another special school and other special centres. This contributes effectively towards developing learning communities and ensuring quality jointly. The school works very successfully with friends of Canolfan y Don. The friends contributed several thousand pounds towards resources for the centre, and pupils have benefitted significantly from this.

Parents contribute appropriately towards the school's work through the activities of the Parent Teacher Association. However, the school does not communicate effectively enough with parents.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has an appropriate level of staff and it makes effective use of their expertise to support individuals and enrich teaching and learning. Staff at the school have now begun to work together as a team. Staff at Canolfan y Don ensure that they make effective use of their time, expertise and experience to offer effective teaching and support to pupils. Teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time appropriately. This contributes towards maintaining pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school has appropriate performance management arrangements for teachers and assistants. All members of staff benefit from training, which is arranged according to the school's priorities and individual needs.

Recently, the school has put firm guidelines in place to monitor and manage the school's expenditure carefully. The governing body has made appropriate decisions to respond to the financial deficit as a result of a decline in the number of pupils at the school. By working effectively with the authority, the school has a suitable plan in place to respond to the situation.

Considering pupils' outcomes, the school and Canolfan y Don offer good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

In general, pupils' initial assessments on admission to the school show low linguistic and mathematical skills. At the end of the Foundation Phase, achievements at the expected outcome (outcome 5) compare favourably with those in similar schools in all areas, except for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. The school's performance in this learning area places it in the lowest 25% of similar schools in terms of levels of entitlement to free school meals. However, performance at outcome 5 and 6 in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh places the school among the top 25% of similar schools. When the outcomes of pupils at Canolfan y Don are removed from this data, the school's performance generally places it among the top 25% or 50% in all learning areas in comparison with similar schools.

In 2012, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 was good. In general, over the last three years, except in 2012, the school was placed in the bottom 25% and 50% in all core subjects for a majority of the time in comparison with similar schools in terms of level of entitlement to free school meals. Although there has been a significant increase in the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4+ in Welsh over the last three years, in general, the school's performance remains in the lower 50% in comparison with that of similar schools. Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils who have attained level 4+ in spoken Welsh has risen consistently and now compares favourably with performance levels in other schools in the family. Although progress can be seen in written Welsh, there was a decline in the number of pupils who attained level 4+ in 2012. However, when the outcomes of pupils at Canolfan y Don are removed from this data, the school's performance over the last three years places it in the top 25% and 50% of similar schools. Pupils' achievements at the higher level (level 5+) compare less favourably.

In general, there is no significant gap between the performance of boys and girls at the end of the Foundation Phase. Over a period of time, boys at the end of key stage 2 achieve better than girls at the higher levels (level 5+) in mathematics and science. Data over a period of time shows that pupils who receive free school meals achieve less well.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

Responses were received from 63 pupils. The responses are very positive and generally higher than the national averages for primary schools in many aspects.

All children feel safe at the school and note that nearly all pupils behave well lunch time and on the playground. Many note that the school deals well with any bullying. Nearly all pupils note that they are doing well at school and that teachers and other adults help them to make progress. Most pupils feel that there are enough opportunities for them to exercise at school and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy.

Most pupils note that others behave well, that they can do their work and that children behave well during play time and lunch time.

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires as only a small number of responses were received (fewer than 10).

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Anwen Griffith	Reporting Inspector
Maldwyn Pryse	Team Inspector
William Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
Eirian Williams	Lay Inspector
Kevin Davies	Peer Inspector
Robert Jenkins	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, 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



## **Glossary of terms – Primary**

### **Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)**

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language;
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

### **The core subject indicator (CSI)**

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language;
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.