



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 Cwrtnewydd
Cwrtnewydd
Llanybydder
Ceredigion
SA40 9YN**

Date of inspection: November 2012

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

The school is situated on the outskirts of the village of Cwrtnewydd, about eight miles to the west of Lampeter. It is maintained by Ceredigion local authority. At present, there are 37 pupils aged between four and 11 years on roll. Pupils come from the village itself and the nearby areas. Pupils are taught by two full-time teachers, two part-time teachers and two teaching assistants. The area that is served by the school is a traditionally Welsh area and about 50% of pupils speak Welsh at home. Welsh is the school's main medium of communication and learning.

Welsh first language study programmes are taught. The area is not considered to be privileged or economically disadvantaged. Thirteen per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is less than the county and national percentages. Pupils' attainment varies considerably when they start school. A variety of social backgrounds is represented and the school does not consider the area to be either prosperous or economically disadvantaged.

About 11% of pupils have additional learning needs (ALN), which is lower than the national average. None of them has a statement of additional learning needs. There have been considerable changes in the nature and organisation of the school since the last inspection in the Autumn Term 2006. The head teacher was appointed to the post in January 2012.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gymunedol Cwrtnewydd in 2012-2013 is £3,842 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Ceredigion authority is £12,284 and the minimum is £2,820. Ysgol Gymunedol Cwrtnewydd is 30th of the 58 primary schools in Ceredigion authority in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's performance is excellent because:

- its standards are consistently higher than those of similar schools;
- nearly all pupils make significant progress during their period in the school;
- nearly all pupils feel safe and are receiving very good support from the school;
- pupils show respect and care for each other and for adults;
- teachers track pupils' progress very effectively; and
- planning for the needs of individuals and groups of learners is very effective.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- the head teacher provides very firm leadership, based on values of sharing and respect;
- particularly effective use is made of performance data to analyse results and trends and to plan strategically for improvement;
- the head teacher's vision is core to school life and everyone understands and implements the aims and objectives;
- it has a comprehensive and thorough self-evaluation process that is a regular part of its life and work;
- it has a number of strategic partners that contribute very effectively to provision and to high standards;
- the head teacher and the staff manage all the resources very effectively.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure a further increase in the proportion of pupils who reach higher levels

R2 Develop more opportunities for numeracy and writing in English across the curriculum.

R3 Strengthen aspects of global citizenship.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice that was seen during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

Nearly all pupils in the school make significant progress. Nearly all succeed particularly well and attain high standards.

In the Foundation Phase, the youngest pupils settle in quickly, make particularly good progress, and develop effectively as independent learners.

Most pupils make exceptional progress in their oracy and listening skills during their time at the school. A minority of pupils in the Foundation Phase who often begin at a low entry level attain high standards by the end of key stage 2. They recall information that was learnt previously well and they use and adapt their skills well in a variety of situations.

Pupils in the Foundation Phase handle and discuss stories and become increasingly familiar with using appropriate books. Their early reading skills are developing very well and they use a range of appropriate strategies in order to tackle new words. By the end of the Foundation Phase, the majority can write independently with neat handwriting and correct spelling in Welsh.

In key stage 2, most pupils read fluently and show a good understanding of the text. They discuss their fiction and factual reading books enthusiastically and use their investigative skills confidently to improve their own work. The most able pupils write imaginatively and effectively for a varied audience, doing this at length across the curriculum.

During their time at the school, pupils develop very well as independent learners. They develop appropriate strategies in order to solve problems and they make very good progress in their literacy and thinking skills. In both key stages, pupils can speak appropriately and fluently in formal situations when necessary and can express their ideas and opinions clearly, using natural language.

Key stage 2 pupils make very good progress in their bilingual skills and they are completely fluent in English and Welsh by the end of key stage 2. Most speak confidently, using a suitable and wide range of vocabulary in both languages.

The percentage of pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012 who achieve at the expected level (outcome 5+) or higher in Welsh, mathematical development and personal development skills is considerably higher than the average for the family of schools. The school's performance places it also within the top 25% of similar schools in terms of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

The percentage of pupils who have achieved the expected level or higher, namely level 4, in English, Welsh, mathematics and science in 2012 is considerably higher than the performance of the schools in the family. The performance also within the

top 25% of similar schools in terms of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. These trends have been consistent over the last five years. The percentage of pupils who achieve higher levels than expected, namely level 5, has varied in comparison with performance levels in similar schools over the last five years.

There is no significant pattern of difference in the performance of boys in comparison with girls' performance or between pupils who are entitled to free school meals in comparison with those who are not entitled.

Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs make the expected progress for their ability and age. A few attain higher standards. This is a strength at the school. Able and talented pupils make very good progress.

Wellbeing: Excellent

All pupils state that they feel safe and receive very good support from the school. They have a strong understanding of what is needed to keep healthy and they take part in the regular opportunities to keep fit.

The standards of behaviour and self-discipline of all pupils in lessons and around the school are excellent. All pupils across the school show respect for each other and for adults; they are very courteous pupils. They are proud of their school and their attitude to learning is exceptional.

All pupils contribute very effectively to various activities at the school, support charities and attend a range of extra-curricular clubs.

Pupils' attendance is a little over 95% and places the school in the top quarter of schools that have a similar background. Punctuality is very good.

The school council is enthusiastic and active, and has a positive effect on the school environment. Members work together very well with staff to ensure that the school is a safe, healthy and happy place. They have successful links with local businesses that support the 'Bagiau Iachus Cwrt' project. All pupils, across the school, realise that the school council represents them and that their opinions count.

All the school's pupils show maturity as they self-evaluate, monitor subjects, express an opinion and influence school life. Pupils' contribution towards extending their interest, their independence and enjoyment in the life and work of the school is innovative.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Excellent

A very wide range of activities and stimulating experiences is provided by the teachers and assistants that meets the needs of all pupils at the school. A very positive feature is that the voice and needs of the learner feed into the plans. Pupils have an opportunity to work in smaller groups with effective specialist support and, as a result, they make considerable progress.

Close attention is paid to planning literacy, creative, problem solving and thinking skills across the curriculum. Clear progression is provided in terms of continuity and progress and learners' communication and reading skills are very effective. Pupils are challenged to work consistently by responding to challenging personal targets that encourage them to develop as independent learners. All pupils benefit considerably from opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities such as the Urdd and Sports Club and they go on many visits during the year.

The rich provision for developing the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is central to the school's whole life and work. Teachers promote the history, geography, culture and music of Wales very well and pupils' awareness is strong. Pupils make very good progress in their bilingual skills and they are completely fluent in English and Welsh by the end of key stage 2.

The school has an active and very effective Eco Council that raises the awareness of pupils in the whole school to be sustainable and to care for the environment. Although the school raises money for the local hospital, for places such as Haiti and, more recently, has set up a partnership with a group of other countries, global citizenship has not been developed consistently enough through the school.

Teaching: Good

The standard of teaching is robust across the school and teachers have good subject knowledge. A wide range of teaching methods and resources of an appropriate quality is used, that gain the interest of almost all pupils. Planning is detailed and teachers have high expectations. They question effectively and are good language models. There is a very effective working relationship between adults and pupils, which fosters a healthy atmosphere for learning; appropriate work is provided that stimulates and challenges nearly all pupils.

Constructive oral and written feedback is given to pupils in order for them to understand what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. Assessment for learning procedures are a core part of the life of the school. Increasing opportunities are being provided for pupils to plan jointly with teachers, to reflect on their own learning and that of their peers and to contribute effectively to the process of setting targets in order to improve their work. This element is a strength in the school and contributes effectively towards reaching and maintaining high standards.

Teachers track pupils' progress very effectively and, as a result, they plan specifically for the needs of individuals and groups of learners. The school works together with other teachers from local primary schools and the secondary school in order to come to an agreement on the standards of teachers' assessments. Staff produce comprehensible annual reports for parents and carers on pupils' progress. These reports are comprehensive and explain clearly what areas need to be improved.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Through a number of innovative activities the school promotes pupils' health and wellbeing very successfully. For example, the business scheme between a local shopkeeper and older pupils to sell fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis to parents and fruit to pupils raises awareness and encourages all the school's pupils to eat healthily.

Pupils have very good opportunities to express an opinion as they develop socially, culturally, morally and spiritually. The school co-operates especially well with other key agencies such as the police and county officers to promote pupils' health and safety further.

Provision for personal and specialist support for all pupils is exceptional. The process of identifying and responding quickly to the needs of individual pupils, including those who are more able and talented, is very successful.

The school also has very robust arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils who have additional learning needs. The curriculum meets the needs of groups and individuals and offers a personal programme for pupils who have specific needs. This includes individual plans for relevant pupils, which are reviewed regularly by parents and pupils as part of the process. As a result, pupils are very clear about what is expected of them and they make considerable progress.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and they are not a cause of concern.

Learning environment: Good

An extremely inclusive, happy ethos has been established in the school, based on the great respect of pupils for each other and for others. Pupils' kindness towards each other is a prominent feature. All pupils have equal opportunities to access all learning areas and an emphasis is placed upon the importance of recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity through a very successful personal and social education programme. Pupils are prepared well for the next steps in education and life.

Classrooms are attractive and effective use is made of resources to enrich the curriculum and to meet pupils' needs. However, the classrooms are small in size and at times they limit pupils' activities. The condition and cleanliness of the school are good and there are colourful displays in the school that reinforce the teaching.

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

Very robust leadership is provided by the head teacher, based on values of sharing and respect. Her high expectations ensure a direction and culture that strives for continuous improvement and maintaining the excellent standards that are evident in the everyday life of the school. The head teacher has the firm support of the teacher in charge and the rest of the staff and this ensures working closely as a team. The whole staff share the values and expectations and fulfil their roles very conscientiously. The leadership ensures that all aspects and progressiveness of the life of the school have a clear and positive influence on the standards that are achieved by pupils.

Staff meetings focus very clearly on improvement plans and place an emphasis on reviewing previous decisions regularly in order to identify and evaluate progress.

Particularly effective use is made of performance data to analyse outcomes and trends and to plan strategically for improvement.

The governing body provides effective support. Governors have a very good understanding of performance data and are aware of the issues that arise from analysing data and from the school's self-evaluation report. Information is used regularly to agree on areas that the school needs to improve further, and to challenge the head teacher when it is appropriate to do so. Governors fulfil their role as critical friends fully.

Excellent attention is paid to local and national priorities and the principles of the Schools Effectiveness Framework influence the life and work of the school very effectively. The Foundation Phase has been established effectively and particularly good attention is paid to the importance of developing literacy and numeracy.

Improving quality: Excellent

The excellent self-evaluation arrangements, which are part of the life and work of the school, ensure that leaders have a very good understanding of the school's performance. The process is comprehensive and extremely thorough. In order to maintain high standards, the head teacher, staff and governors show absolute commitment. A very good range of monitoring activities is used, including detailed data analysis, observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. Listening to the pupil's voice is a very strong element in the process, and their comments, as well as those of parents, are considered seriously.

Priorities in the school improvement plan focus clearly on raising standards. Quantitative, challenging targets are set and the plan identifies detailed actions that include success indicators and suitable timetables for completion. There is a very clear link between the findings of the self-evaluation process and planning for improving outcomes.

The relationship with the local authority's education service ensures a continuous challenge for the school as it goes through the annual self-evaluation process.

There is an established professional learning community at the school, which enables staff to develop and share their professional knowledge very effectively. They make the best possible use of the partnership with other schools.

Partnership working: Excellent

The school is at the forefront of the process of moderating and standardising continuous assessments jointly. As a result of the Three Subject Plan, teaching staff exchange with teachers from other schools, and this has a positive effect on the experiences of all the pupils at the school. The school has a number of strategic partnerships that contribute very effectively to the provision and to the excellent standards that pupils achieve. The strong partnership with parents contributes very effectively to fulfilling the school's aims and improvements. A special feature of the partnership is the number of courses that are delivered to parents, which is an excellent medium for establishing a strong relationship and involving parents in the process of maintaining and improving standards.

There are very many links with the local community and this has an extensive influence on pupils' learning experiences and their awareness of their community and the importance of contributing to it.

There is very effective co-operation and planning between the school and the other two schools in the cluster, which has a positive effect on raising the standards of learning and teaching.

There is a very close link between the school and the Cylch Ti a Fi that is held in the school hall and also the nursery schools that meet there occasionally. The guidelines for preparing new pupils to settle in quickly when they start school are very successful.

There are very effective transition programmes to ensure that pupils continue with their progress from the Foundation Phase to key stage 2 and then from Year 6 to the local secondary school. The close co-operation and the staff's working relationship are extremely effective and have a strong influence on pupils' standards and on the practice of exchanging good teaching practices.

Resource management: Excellent

The head teacher and staff manage all resources very skilfully. They ensure an effective level of staffing to teach the curriculum successfully, ensuring that staff make the best use of their time, expertise and experience. The performance management arrangements are very thorough and have a considerable effect on standards.

The school's expenditure decisions link well with priorities for improvement. Sharing resources with other small schools in the cluster is a strength and results in improving pupils' outcomes.

The school gives excellent value for money because it works very effectively as a learning community and ensures very good outcomes. It manages its resources very well to ensure that all pupils reach their potential, including able and talented pupils.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the Foundation Phase in 2012, pupils' achievement is good in relation to attaining the expected level in Welsh language skills, mathematical development and personal development (the Foundation Phase indicator) and better in comparison with national achievement and the average for the family of schools. Boys and girls performed equally in 2012. Pupils' achievement at outcome 6, namely the higher than expected level, is higher than the average performance for the family and nationally.

Pupils' performance by the end of key stage 2 has been consistently high over four of the last five years. In 2012, pupils' achievement in English or Welsh as a first language, mathematics and science in combination (the core subject indicator) was higher than the mean for the family of schools. This was also true in four of the last five years in English and Welsh and for the last five years in mathematics and science.

In Welsh, the percentage of pupils that achieved the expected level or higher, namely level 4, has generally been higher than the mean for the family of schools in four of the last five years. Performance in reading and writing in Welsh has been higher than the mean for the family of schools in four years of the last five and the trend has again been upward since 2011. In English, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level, namely level 4, has been higher than the mean for the family over the last five years.

In 2012, the percentage of pupils in key stage 2 who achieved the expected level, namely level 4 in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination (the core subject indicator) places the school among the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

Almost without exception, the school's performance in the individual core subjects in key stage 2 has placed it in the upper 50% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals over the last five years.

In general, the percentage of pupils who achieved a higher level than expected, level 5 or higher, has been uneven, and sometimes higher than the mean for the family of schools and Wales over the last five years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

Twenty-five pupils responded to the questionnaire. The response is very positive, and all agree with almost all of the statements. Nearly all agree that the school deals well with any bullying and nearly all know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious. A very few pupils disagree that other children behave well and also that they are doing well at school. All agree that the school supports and helps them well, and teaches them how to keep healthy. All pupils say that they feel safe at school and that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. The response is more positive than the average across Wales.

Parent questionnaires

Responses were received from 11 parents. Most agree strongly that their children like school and that their children make good progress. They are of the opinion that the school is run very well and nearly all of them feel that their children are safe at school and that pupils behave well. Many parents agree that their children are encouraged to take regular physical exercise and taught to keep healthy. Most say that staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect and there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits. Parents also indicate that they understand the school's system for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Eleri Hurley	Reporting Inspector
Huw Watkins	Team Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Veronica Williams	Lay Inspector
Catrin James	Peer Inspector
Heddwen Davies	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority. If it is available, the data report can be seen on our website alongside this report.

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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	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