



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 Gymraeg Santes Tudful,
Pantyffin Road,
Twynnyrodyn,
Merthyr Tydfil,
CF47 0HU

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

Dr David Gareth Evans

for

**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 Santes Tudful is a Welsh-medium primary school. It serves the town of Merthyr Tydfil and neighbouring villages. Pupils come from a mixed residential area with a high percentage of them, around 60%, coming from an economically disadvantaged background and the remainder from areas neither prosperous nor disadvantaged. Thirty-one per cent of pupils come from an area within the top 20% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales.

There are 404 pupils, including 59 part-time children of nursery age, on the register. Thirteen per cent of pupils have been registered as entitled to receive free school meals, and this is lower than national and local averages. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and there are another 12% with additional learning needs; these figures are below national and local averages.

Many pupils come from English-speaking homes and only two per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is the main language. Welsh is used as the medium of teaching in the Foundation Phase; in key stage two, pupils are taught through the medium of both Welsh and English with the aim of ensuring that they are bilingual by the time they transfer to the secondary school at 11 years of age.

The school was last inspected in March 2006 and there have been a few changes in staffing since then. The head teacher is in post since October 1993.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Santes Tudful in 2011-2012 is £3111 which compares with a maximum of £7735 and a minimum of £328 for primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil. The school is in the 23rd position out of the 24 primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil in terms of its budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

This school is good because:

- of the school's success in developing bilingualism from an early age;
- most pupils make good progress in learning and achieve good standards in their key skills;
- it offers a wide range of experiences that reinforce and stimulate learning;
- very effective use is made of classroom assistants' expertise to enrich the learning experiences;
- teaching is good across the school; and
- there is a caring ethos which ensures that nearly all pupils enjoy the school and feel safe.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the head teacher has shared his clear vision with staff, governors and parents;
- of the success of the head teacher and staff in creating very effective systems to develop the school;
- of the staff's desire to work in partnership with the head teacher to realise his vision; and
- the school has identified specific aspects to develop in the future that are currently being implemented.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 continue to raise English and Welsh writing standards, especially in key stage 2;

R2 ensure that the teaching consistently offers challenging work for pupils of all abilities in order to raise standards; and

R3 further develop the role of the governing body as critical friends.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

During the last four years, the school's performance in key stage 1 in Welsh, mathematics and science combined (the core subject indicator) is lower than the averages for schools in the same family, but higher than the Wales average in three out of the four years. Over the last four years the trend has been fairly variable in Welsh, mathematics and science. Overall, the numbers attaining level 3 in key stage 1 was higher than the family in the three core subjects over that period.

In key stage 2, the performance in the core subject indicator has been higher than the average for Wales over the last three years, but lower than the average for the family of schools in 2010 and 2011. During these years, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 was higher than the average for the family of schools in Welsh, English and mathematics. Overall, the numbers attaining the higher levels were better than the family average over the previous five years. Girls performed better than boys in both key stages over the last four years.

Pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals and pupils that have additional learning needs are making good progress in both key stages. The more able and talented pupils are achieving adequately overall.

Many pupils start school with skills lower than expected for children of their age. Standards at the end of the Foundation Phase, compared with baseline assessment results when they enter the school, show significant progress. Pupils' early reading and writing skills show strong progress. By the end of the Foundation Phase, the vast majority of them attain the outcomes expected for their age in language, literacy and communication skills and in mathematical development.

By the end of the Foundation Phase nearly all pupils communicate effectively, especially orally in Welsh, and make full use of their reading and writing skills across the curriculum.

In key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in their learning. They use Welsh fluently and effectively in all kinds of formal and informal situations. Nearly all pupils' listening skills are good. The majority are able to discuss a variety of topics effectively in Welsh, and also in English, across the school.

Most pupils make successful use of reading material in one language and present the information in another language. Many are able to read meaningfully and with good expression in both languages and write to a standard commensurate with their age and ability. Pupils use a wide range of reading and writing skills effectively for

different purposes. This includes proof reading, scan reading, re-drafting and writing for different audiences. Although their written work in both languages gives appropriate attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar, the majority of pupils use too many worksheets and the presentation of their work and the quality of their handwriting are less effective.

Most pupils throughout the school work independently, make good use of their time and keep on task. They show enthusiasm and a positive attitude towards their learning.

In both key stages most pupils' numeracy standards are good. They measure, collect data and use graphs effectively to present their findings in different subjects, such as history, cooking and science, across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils' information and communications technology skills develop well.

Wellbeing: Good

The school is an inclusive, happy and caring community and pupils' enjoyment and their active participation in the life of the school are strong features. All pupils have a good awareness of health issues and they are very knowledgeable about the importance of healthy eating. They achieve well in their personal, social and cultural development. They feel safe in the school and state that they enjoy their learning experiences.

Nearly all pupils show interest and motivation in their work and they display a pride and confidence when undertaking practical and physical activities. They are developing their skills to improve their own learning.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good towards each other, teachers and visitors. Behaviour during lessons and play times is very good and pupils are courteous and respond well to their fellow pupils and to adults. They develop confidence and positive and respectful attitudes towards other children and adults, which is a good foundation for further developing their social and life skills.

The school's attendance rate at 93.49% is good, and this is higher than national and local averages. Most pupils attend regularly and they are punctual.

Pupils' views have a prominent place in school decision making. The school council has a positive influence on the work of the school and specific outcomes.

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

The school provides an extensive range of rich learning experiences for pupils of all ages. Teachers collaborate to plan work programmes which engage the interest of pupils. Learning activities enrich them further by means of a good range of interesting practical activities. Provision to develop literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology skills has a prominent place within the plans and this enables pupils to use them effectively across the curriculum.

Teachers incorporate activities that promote pupils' thinking skills in many of the lessons.

Provision and planning for the development of the Welsh language are good. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted successfully in all aspects of the life and work of the school by ensuring that pupils actively participate in Welsh cultural activities in the local community. The school very effectively promotes an understanding of the history, geography, art, traditions and culture of Wales. This is at the core of the school's work and ethos.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship has been developed effectively. The school has won the Eco School Green Flag for the second time. Eco Club members are proud of their role and show mature awareness of the problems of other people in the world. The school responds very well to current issues which are in the news across the world and which are of interest to pupils.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. When teaching is at its best, pupils are encouraged to work independently and to produce work of a good standard. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the curriculum; they explain new concepts clearly and motivate pupils effectively. There is good pace to the lessons and teachers always establish very good relationships with pupils.

In the language lessons, pupils have good opportunities to check their work in relation to specific success criteria. There are some opportunities for pupils to assess their own and each other's written work in subjects across the curriculum. The practice of including success criteria for key skills is developing well.

Teachers support pupils well when they are at their tasks. Nevertheless, tasks are not always adapted well enough for the whole ability range and, at times, they lack sufficient challenge.

In the very few sessions where there are shortcomings in teaching, the presentations are too long and the pace of the teaching too slow. The questioning is closed and the level of pupil participation decreases.

There are effective assessment procedures which record clearly each pupil's achievements. There is a well-established process of tracking pupil progress from the Foundation Phase through key stage 2, and the school uses the information effectively to set individual pupil targets. Assessment for learning strategies are developing successfully. Overall, marking is positive and helps pupils to improve, but this is not consistent across the school.

Annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements and include appropriate comments on pupils' progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a friendly community and all members of staff promote positive values. The provision for moral, social, cultural and spiritual development is good. There is a

devout atmosphere in the daily acts of worship. Pupils contribute well to religious services and they have an opportunity to reflect on the message presented.

Educational guidance is good and promotes pupils' wellbeing by ensuring that they work to their targets in order to progress quickly to the next stages in their learning. The importance of physical health is emphasized effectively across the curriculum. This is supported by good outdoor play facilities and pupils having equal opportunities to join in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The school liaises well with a number of specialist agencies, such as the police, health services and social services.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good and the special needs teacher's expertise is used effectively. The curriculum meets the needs of groups and individuals and offers a high quality personal programme for pupils with specific needs. There are individual plans for relevant pupils and regular reviews of their work, which involve parents and pupils as part of the process. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and they make good progress.

Learning environment: Good

There is a very inclusive ethos; the school is a welcoming community and there is a warm atmosphere among staff and pupils. Everyone shows a willingness to help each other and every member of the school is given equal opportunities. A prominent feature is the family ethos, which is based on implementing policies that respect the rights of each individual in the school community. The atmosphere promotes effective attendance levels and the good standard of behaviour across the school.

The school very effectively prepares pupils for the next stage in their life. Positive attitudes towards equality and diversity are promoted in various ways, such as collecting for charities, fostering international attitudes, in curricular themes and circle time.

The school is on a pleasant site and the grounds are appropriately utilised for play and learning. There is an extensive supply of high quality resources and the colourful and attractive displays throughout the school are very stimulating. The facilities are clean and the whole site and buildings are very well maintained. There are very effective procedures for managing the site for the benefit of the school and the community.

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

The head teacher has a clear vision and values which are supported and promoted by the governors and staff and give a clear direction to the development of the school. The senior management team meet regularly to review the areas for

improving in the school development plan. Members of the governing body have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and there is a strong attitude towards team work to support learning and teaching throughout the school.

The school addresses national and local priorities effectively. It has made good progress in implementing the Foundation Phase and in raising boys' literacy standards. Pupils' thinking skills are developed well across the school and they are given a clear voice when deciding on aspects of the work of the school.

There are a wide range of management and curricular policies that are implemented effectively. All members of staff have clear responsibilities and job descriptions and they undertake their duties well. Continuous professional development is supported by means of an effective performance management system.

The governing body and the head teacher collaborate effectively and governors receive regular reports from the head teacher. They are aware of the strengths and the areas for development, but they acknowledge that they need to be more challenging and undertake a more prominent role in the school's self-evaluation process.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation underpins the life and work of the school. Managers have a successful system which gives specific attention to all subjects and aspects over a period of three years. Careful consideration is given to a range of information, which includes data on standards and an analysis of trends over a period. Constant attention is given to the quality of teaching and learning by means of classroom observations and appropriate arrangements have been established to ascertain the views of parents, members of staff, pupils and governors through questionnaires. The head teacher also makes effective use of the local authority's monitoring reports.

The self-evaluation report clearly outlines strengths and areas for development. There is a close link between self-evaluation outcomes and school development plans priorities. The annual improvement plans are of a good quality and contain appropriate strategies which note tasks to be completed within appropriate time scales. The responsibility for co-ordinating the strategies that are identified have been appropriately allocated to different members of staff and have led to specific improvements in literacy standards across the school.

Members of staff are involved in a range of training and development opportunities. There is good collaboration between members of staff, who evaluate their own practice. This has a positive influence on pupils' education and wellbeing. Staff link with the two neighbouring clusters and this has a positive effect on standards. The school is increasingly developing as a professional learning community.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents are strong and parents support the school's work well. Transition arrangements between the school and the secondary schools enable pupils to be ready for the next stage in their education. There are many appropriate transition and moderating activities based on the secondary school's catchment area.

There are effective partnerships with visitors and volunteers and this has a positive impact on pupils.

There are regular links with the local authority and teacher training establishments; and the school collaborates with the Rhydywaun cluster of schools and the Cyfarthfa cluster on appropriate projects to ensure that good practice is shared.

There are good links with the community and with a few local businesses. Members of the community visit the school to share experiences with pupils and local visits are organised for them.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources effectively. All members of staff collaborate effectively to create an exciting and attractive environment for pupils.

Teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time effectively and, as a result of those arrangements, pupils benefit from the work of specialists, such as in physical education. The role of support staff is effective across the school.

The school provides suitable training in the form of individual courses and joint training courses. It makes the best use of its resources to reinforce pupils' learning experiences.

Expenditure in the school development plan is planned and recorded carefully, especially with regard to staffing requirements.

Taking into account pupils' outcomes and its use of finance the school gives good value for money.

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Appendix 1

Comments on performance data

During the last four years, the schools' performance in key stage 1 in Welsh, mathematics and science combined (the core subject indicator) is lower than the averages for schools in the same family, but higher than the averages for Wales in three out of the four years. Over the last four years the trend has been fairly variable in Welsh, mathematics and science.

In Welsh, the results were higher than national and family averages in 2008, 2010 and 2011. In mathematics the results were lower than national and family averages over the last four years, while in science results were higher than national, local and family results in 2008 and 2010, but lower than those averages in 2011.

Overall, the school's performance in the core subject indicator and the core subjects was in the lowest 50% of similar schools with respect to free school meals during the last five years.

Generally, the numbers attaining level 3 or better in key stage 1 was higher than the family in the three core subjects over this period.

In key stage 2, performance in the core subject indicator has been higher than the average for Wales over the last three years, but lower than the average for the family of schools over the last two years. In English, results have been higher than national and local averages over the last four years, but lower than the family results in 2010 and 2011. In Welsh, results have been higher than the national averages over the same period, but lower than the family in 2010 and 2011. In mathematics and science results have been higher than the national, local and family averages in 2008, 2009, and 2011, but lower than the family in 2010.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 was higher than the average for the family of schools in Welsh, English and mathematics. Overall, the numbers attaining the higher levels was better than the family average over the previous five years. Girls performed better than boys in both key stages over the last four years.

Overall, the school's performance in the core subject indicator and the core subjects has varied when compared with schools that are similar in respect of free school meals entitlement during the last four years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

73 responses to parents or carers' questionnaires were received. The responses are positive and around or above than the national averages. All parents were satisfied with the school overall, and believe that it is well run. Nearly all parents are of the opinion that their children like the school and are making good progress. Nearly all parents believed that the staff treated every child fairly and that they were safe in school. All parents were of the opinion that the children behaved well and nearly all parents understood the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints. Nearly all parents believed that the school provided a good variety of activities, including trips. They were also of the opinion that homework was beneficial and they were satisfied with the manner in which the school prepared their children for moving to the secondary school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

100 pupils completed the questionnaire. The responses give a positive picture, which is around or above the national averages for primary school for all aspects. All children said that the school taught them how to keep healthy and they all believed that teachers and other adults in the school helped them to learn and to make progress. They were of the opinion that the school had sufficient books, equipment and computers to allow them to do their work. Nearly all children knew with whom to talk if they were worried and believed that there were many opportunities in school to have regular physical activity. Nearly all believed that they were doing well in school. Many believed that the school dealt well with any bullying and were of the opinion that homework was a help to them to understand and improve their work in school. The majority of pupils believed that other children behaved well during lunch times and break times and that other children behaved well in class and that they were able to do their work as a result.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dr David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Mr Enir R. Morgan	Team Inspector
Mrs Eleri A. Hurley	Team Inspector
Dr Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Mr Rhys Hughes	Peer Inspector
Mr Dewi Hughes	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

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.