



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 Penllwyn
Capel Bangor
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3LP**

Date of inspection: March 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:

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 Gynradd Gymunedol Penllwyn is situated in the rural village of Capel Bangor, near Aberystwyth. It is a Welsh-medium community school. It serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area.

There are 32 pupils are on roll at present. Pupils are admitted to the school in the term following their fourth birthday. Fifty per cent of the school's pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. There are no pupils from an ethnic background at the school at present.

Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is in line with county and national percentages. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are on the school's additional education needs register. No permanent or temporary exclusions were recorded during the year before the inspection.

Since April 2011, the school has shared a headteacher with Ysgol Penrhyn Coch.

The budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Penllwyn in 2012-2013 is £4,930. The maximum in terms of school budget per pupil in primary schools in Ceredigion is £12,284 and the minimum is £2,820. Ysgol Gynradd Penllwyn is in 13th position out of the 58 primary schools in Ceredigion in terms of budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- performance levels, in general, are higher than the averages for the family of schools
- pupils make consistent progress during their time at the school;
- attendance levels are high and consistently good;
- the school promotes pupils' wellbeing very successfully;
- the quality of teaching is good across the school; and
- the school provides a wide range of varied and rich experiences to pupils in both key stages.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and assistant headteacher have a clear vision for the school;
- the headteacher and assistant headteacher co-operate very effectively and have a very strong influence on the school's success;
- governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and their role as critical friends is developing effectively;
- the self-evaluation process is thorough, and is based firmly on evidence that identifies appropriate areas for improvement; and
- the successful partnership and co-operation between the authority and the school is a strength.

Recommendations

R1 Continue to raise standards of reading in key stage 2

R2 Ensure improvement in the numbers that achieve at the higher outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase and the higher levels at the end of key stage 2

R3 Refine the school's improvement plan to be more quantitative and easier to measure progress against

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

In lessons, Ysgol Penllwyn's pupils apply themselves to tasks and make consistent progress during their time at the school. Most pupils develop into independent learners and use their thinking skills successfully.

Across the school, most pupils show a good understanding of their own progress and are aware of what needs to be done to improve their work.

Pupils listen well to their teachers and are very willing to contribute in lessons. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many use suitable vocabulary and enunciate clearly when discussing their ideas. In key stage 2, the school's oldest pupils answer confidently in Welsh and English, and use vocabulary that is relevant to the work in question. A few pupils of higher ability respond to questions and reason in a more extended way.

Many pupils' reading skills are developing well. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many express a liking for reading and discuss content meaningfully. In key stage 2, many pupils are developing into independent readers and they use reading skills successfully to extract relevant information from a text across a range of subjects. By the end of the key stage, many pupils take an interest in books and discuss their favourite books and authors in both languages.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils write independently and show a firm grasp of sentences and basic punctuation that is appropriate to their age and ability.

In key stage 2, many pupils make good progress in their ability to write at length. Most pupils' written work shows a strong awareness of the features of different forms of writing. They use their writing skills successfully across a range of subjects. Writing is imaginative and a wide vocabulary is used to create effects. In general, the standard of pupils' written work at the top end of the school in Welsh and English is good.

Pupils who receive additional support make significant progress against their targets.

Most pupils across the school use their mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills successfully across a range of subjects.

As a comparatively small number of pupils are assessed at the end of a key stage, performance data must be treated carefully as the results of one pupil account for a high percentage of the cohort in every year group.

At the end of the Foundation Phase, achievements at the expected outcome (outcome 5) compare favourably with averages for schools in the family and Wales, except for language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh. The school's

performance places it in the bottom 25% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals in this learning area, while it is in the top 25% in mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and diversity.

In general, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level in all core subjects (Welsh, English, mathematics and science) has varied. However, performance at the expected level (level 4+) in Welsh and science has been consistently higher than averages for schools in the family and Wales for the last three years.

Pupils' achievement at the higher level (level 5) has varied and, in general, it has been lower than the family of schools and Wales averages.

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

Wellbeing: Good

The school is a happy community that gives a prominent place to pupils' wellbeing and safety. All children feel safe at school and know to whom to speak if they are anxious. Almost all pupils' behaviour is very good in classrooms and on the school yard. One of the school's strengths is the respect and care that children show to each other, particularly older children towards younger children. Most pupils across the school show a great deal of interest and motivation in their work. Attendance levels are very good and place the school in the top 25% in comparison with similar schools.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and they have positive attitudes towards physical exercise. A fruit shop is provided at the school, and this develops pupils' awareness of eating healthily further.

Through the work of the school council and the eco council, pupils have a prominent voice in school decisions. Their ideas have led to ensuring that the school is operated in a more green way, e.g. recycling paper and cardboard. Pupils' understanding of the importance of recycling and caring for the environment is robust.

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

Teachers across the school plan a range of rich learning experiences which develop pupils' skills successfully. Purposeful planning ensures that teachers gain the interest of a full range of pupils and develop them into independent learners. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Phase appropriately.

Provision for developing literacy, numeracy and ICT receives due attention in planning and in lessons. Pupils' experiences are enriched through educational visits, for example to the National Museum and to Rheidol and Pentywyn station.

Teachers identify and target specific groups of pupils who need additional support effectively. This is beginning to have a positive effect on raising pupils' standards and attainment.

Provision and planning for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension are a natural part of the school's life and work. A prominent place is given to local culture and history in schemes of work. This reinforces pupils' awareness of their local area. Through Fair Trade activities and the link that Ysgol Penllwyn has with a school in Poland, pupils' understanding of the wider world is developing well

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching across the school is good and ensures that pupils are motivated and show interest in their learning. Teachers have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase framework and the National Curriculum. Teachers plan carefully and ensure that learning outcomes are clear.

Where teaching is at its best, lessons have a good pace and probing questioning promotes learning successfully. Activities are challenging and interesting and develop pupils' ability to take responsibility for their learning. Success criteria are a natural part of lessons and, at the top end of the school, pupils take an active role in producing them. They are referred to regularly in order to ensure pupils' understanding of the task. This is consistent throughout the school.

Comprehensive and effective procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress. Results of assessments and standardised tests are used successfully. This is a strength at the school.

Pupils' work is marked carefully, and constructive and supportive comments are given which also refer to the way forward. In the best practice, there are good opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and each other's work. With the support of teachers, the oldest pupils at the school set their own targets. Many pupils are aware of what they need to do in order to improve their work.

Annual reports to parents give clear judgements about their children's progress and they meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and inclusive community which gives priority to pupils' health and wellbeing. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good. Regular visitors to the school contribute to this provision. School assemblies create a spiritual ethos and give valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect quietly.

The school has effective arrangements in place for identifying and responding to pupils' educational needs. The school's tracking system and the effective use that is made of data ensure that provision responds appropriately to requirements. Pupils have suitable individual educational programmes, which are shared with parents and reviewed regularly. Intervention programmes are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Effective use is made of various agencies as necessary.

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

The school gives a number of good opportunities for pupils at the school to contribute to community life. An example of this is the work that is done to develop the garden in Capel Bangor station as part of restoration work on railway stations.

Learning environment: Good

There is a special ethos at Ysgol Penllwyn. It is a caring and homely school in which all individuals are respected and supported successfully. There is an inclusive environment and atmosphere that fosters responsible individuals who help each other. This develops pupils into complete, responsible, mature and honest individuals. The school ensures that it offers the same opportunities and experiences to all pupils.

The school is on a pleasant, spacious site and the condition of the school is appropriate. There is a varied supply of resources of good quality to stimulate pupils' learning. Effective use is made of the site for play and learning. There are a number of colourful and stimulating displays within classrooms and corridors that celebrate pupils' work and successes.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision that has been shared very successfully with the school's pupils, parents, staff and governors. The headteacher gives firm leadership to the school and the assistant headteacher's effective support is a very strong influence on the school's success. Leaders have high expectations of themselves and of the school's staff. Everyone's efforts are appreciated and respected. Staff responsibilities have been defined clearly and they have an agreed understanding of strengths and areas to be developed in order to improve pupils' standards of attainment.

Leaders make detailed analyses of a wide range of school performance data and use them effectively in order to see exactly where there is a need to raise standards. Plans to improve reading and writing skills are in place and they ensure that there is improvement in pupils' standards.

The governing body supports the school well in a wide range of duties. Governors are aware of the school's priorities and aspects of the performance of groups of pupils. They are also aware of how the school performs in comparison to other similar schools. They supervise financial management, review policies and the school's procedures and ensure that statutory requirements are met. They are developing their role as critical friends effectively.

The school is addressing meeting national and local priorities well.

The Foundation Phase's principles are being implemented fully and assessment for learning is a natural part of the school's activities.

Improving quality: Good

The school uses a wide range of procedures to evaluate its work, and it gives good consideration to the opinions of parents, governors and pupils.

The self-evaluation process is thorough, valid and based firmly on evidence from monitoring learning and teaching and on a detailed analysis of an appropriate range of data. The report is honest and fair, although it is descriptive in places. As a result, the process identifies the school's strengths and prioritises aspects in need of improvement effectively.

There is a close link between self-evaluation and the priorities in the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan identifies a number of appropriate priorities for development. The plan has been costed and it includes realistic timetables but success criteria are not always quantitative enough to measure their effectiveness.

Staff have very good opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and their skills by shouldering leadership responsibilities and through continuous professional development. The school has benefited from co-operating and sharing learning practices effectively with Ysgol Penrhyn Coch.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a number of effective partnerships. A strong partnership exists with parents, and pupils benefit from the contribution of volunteers who visit the school regularly to listen to them reading. The school's Parent-Teacher Association is very active and it raises a considerable amount of money to buy resources for the school that enrich the provision and pupils' attainment. The weekly newsletter, the school website and the use of technology are a valuable resource and an effective means of sharing information.

A business week was held at the school recently, and the close links with local businesses have developed pupils' awareness of the world of work. An effective partnership exists with the Cwm Rheidol Railway society, to which the school's pupils are regular visitors, and they care for the garden. This has developed pupils' understanding of what is needed to grow flowers and vegetables successfully. This aspect is developed further in the school grounds, where a 'science garden' has been established.

An effective and successful partnership exists with the authority's officers, which has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and attainment. This partnership is a strength in the school.

Effective arrangements have been established with the local nursery group, in order to facilitate children's transfer to the school. The partnership with Ysgol Penrhyn Coch is developing well.

There is successful co-operation with secondary schools, and these ensure effective transition for pupils and prepare them for the next stage in their education. Effective arrangements exist between the schools in the area, and the secondary schools, in order to standardise and moderate teachers' assessment at the end of the key stage.

Resource management: Good

The school has an appropriate level of staff and effective use is made of their expertise to enrich teaching and learning. Assistants co-operate effectively to give good support to pupils. The school has a range of learning resources of good quality, and it takes advantage of every opportunity to enrich provision across the school.

Performance management arrangements are in place for teachers and assistants, and they meet the school staff's professional needs and the school's priorities.

The school meets statutory requirements regarding teachers' workload.

The school manages funding effectively. Expenditure matches priorities in the school improvement plan. Careful monitoring by the headteacher ensures that the school operates within budget.

Considering pupils' outcomes, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

As there is a comparatively small number of pupils at the school, performance data must be treated carefully as the results for one pupil account for a high percentage of the cohort in all year groups.

At the end of the Foundation Phase, achievements at the expected outcome (outcome 5) compare favourably with averages for schools in the family and Wales, except in language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh. The school's performance places it in the bottom 25%, in comparison with schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals in this learning area, whilst it is in the top 25% in mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and diversity.

In general, the school's performance at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level in all core subjects (Welsh, English, mathematics and science) has varied. However, the school's performance in Welsh and science has been higher than the averages for schools in the family for the last three years. Over the last two years, the school's performance has improved and, in general, has placed the school in the top 25% to the top 50%-25% in all learning areas in comparison with schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

Pupils' achievement at the higher level (level 5) has varied and, in general, it has been lower than the family of schools and Wales averages over time, although there has been improvement over the last two years.

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

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Sixteen responses were received from pupils. Responses are very positive and, in general, are higher than the national averages for primary schools for almost all aspects.

Nearly all pupils feel that there are enough opportunities for them to take physical exercise regularly in school and that homework helps them to understand and improve their work at school.

Most of them indicate that others behave well, that they are able to do their work and that children behave well at play time and lunch time.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Seventeen responses to the questionnaire were received. Responses are very positive and, in general, more positive than the average for primary schools. All parents agree that they are satisfied with the school, and that it is well run. Nearly all feel that their child is making good progress and that they receive regular information about their child's progress. All parents agree strongly that their child is safe at school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Anwen Griffiths	Reporting Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Melfyn Hopkins	Peer Inspector
Emyr Pugh-Evans	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (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.