



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 Lôn Las
Walters Road
Llansamlet
Swansea
SA7 9RW

Date of inspection: December 2011

by

Mr J R Jones

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 Gynradd Gymraeg Lôn Las is situated in the village of Llansamlet in the north east of the city of Swansea. Pupils come from a number of areas within the city that include St Thomas, Dan y Graig, Pentre-chwyth, Cwm, Trallwn, Morriston, Pentre-poeth, Cwmrhydyceirw, Ynystawe, Ynysforfan and Llansamlet. There are 515 pupils on roll, of which 475 attend full-time and the remainder is part-time in the nursery. This is a substantial increase of approximately 70% since the last inspection. Pupils come from a background that according to the school is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Around 8% are entitled to free school meals, which is significantly lower than the national percentage of 20%. Approximately 1% comes from a background which is not white British.

Pupils are admitted on a full-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. English is the main language spoken at home by about 90% of the pupils with Welsh being the main language of the others. Every pupil is expected to be fluent in both Welsh and English by the time they are 11 years old. Pupils represent the full range of ability.

Around 21% of pupils have additional educational needs, of which 8% are on school action plus, mainly because of language and communication difficulties. Another 2% have a statement of special education needs.

Pupils are taught in 19 classes by 20 full-time teachers and two part-time teachers, as well as 19 full-time and six part-time classroom assistants. The school has a bursar and a clerk, both of whom work full-time. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1 to 22. Classes on average have 23 pupils.

The school was previously inspected in October 2005. The current head teacher was appointed in September 2004.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Lôn Las in 2011-2012 is £2560 per pupil, which compares with a maximum of £11,089 and a minimum of £2560 for primary schools in Swansea. The school has the lowest budget per pupil of the 86 primary schools in the city.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is excellent because:

- the results of teacher assessments place the school amongst the best 25% in Wales during the last three years for pupils of seven years of age and for the last two years for pupils of 11 years of age, when compared to schools in similar social and economic circumstances;
- many pupils achieve good and excellent standards in their lessons across the curriculum;
- there is a caring, inclusive and happy ethos in the school, the contribution of all pupils and staff is appreciated and everyone is treated with respect;
- pupils have very good bilingual skills in Welsh and English that allow them to turn easily from one language to the other;
- pupils throughout the school develop well as independent learners; they build upon prior knowledge effectively and readily adapt their understanding and skills to new situations;
- the very effective teaching has a positive impact on standards, especially on improving pupils' literacy, numeracy and other wider skills; and
- there is a very effective assessment system, focused on identifying individual learning needs, that supports and challenges pupils of all ages to achieve to the best of their ability.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- there is a very effective management organisation which gives responsibility to staff at all levels and which involves pupils of all ages in deciding what and how they learn;
- there is an agreed sense of purpose and direction; all staff work well together to improve outcomes for pupils;
- the school has responded very effectively to the revised National Curriculum introduced in 2008, allowing teachers and pupils to make the most of learning;
- self-evaluation focuses on raising pupils' standards, for example improving the performance of the more able boys to achieve as well as girls;
- governors act very effectively as critical friends highlighting areas for further improvement;

- there are appropriate arrangements in place to improve pupils' attendance; and
- the school has a successful history of continuous improvement within buildings that have seen better days.

Recommendations

In order to improve further the school needs to:

R1 maintain the good and excellent standards;

R2 raise boys' achievement;

R3 improve pupil attendance; and

R4 work with the authority to improve the condition of the school's buildings.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

National Curriculum assessment results show that many pupils at seven years of age at the end of key stage 1 and at eleven years of age at the end of key stage 2 attain very good standards. These results place the school amongst the best 25% in Wales during the last three years for pupils of seven years of age and for the last two years for eleven year old pupils, when compared to schools in similar social and economic circumstances.

Nearly all pupils make very good progress during their time in the Foundation Phase, often from a low starting point. Progress made by seven year old pupils is built upon very effectively in every year in key stage two.

In the Foundation Phase pupils using the Welsh language discuss stories and become increasingly accustomed to using appropriate books. Their early reading skills are developing well and, by seven years of age, most read for purpose and show good understanding of the text. They use a range of appropriate strategies to learn new words. The majority at the end of the Foundation Phase can produce short pieces of writing independently with neat handwriting and correct spelling in Welsh.

In key stage 2 nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Older and more able pupils read with fluency and clear expression in Welsh and English. They enjoy reading fiction and factual books appropriate to their age and ability. Nearly all speak confidently and with an appropriate range of vocabulary in both languages. They use their good literacy and bilingual skills very effectively in their work across the curriculum.

Older pupils' enthusiasm for books is a very good stimulus for them to write for a wide range of purposes. They use their writing skills well when writing stories or when recording factual information from a variety of sources. Their numeracy and information and communication technology skills are good and appropriate to their age and ability. They use these skills very effectively in their work across the curriculum.

Pupils throughout the school develop well as independent learners. They build upon prior knowledge effectively, develop appropriate strategies for solving problems and readily adapt their understanding and skills to new situations. As a result, they are able to express their opinions and views clearly and confidently. They are also able to speak appropriately and easily in formal situations when necessary. They make very good progress in their literacy and thinking skills from the nursery to Year six.

Boys' attainment at seven and eleven years of age has improved when compared with girls' attainment during the last three years. In 2011 boys at eleven years of age

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did better than girls in all subjects at the expected level 4. More able girls, however, did better than boys at the higher level 5. This is mainly because there were a higher percentage of boys in 2011 with additional learning needs. This contributed significantly to boys' performance in 2011 at the higher level being low in comparison to other schools in the family, the authority and Wales.

Pupils with special educational needs and other vulnerable pupils are making very good progress against their individual targets.

Pupils receiving free school meals have improved in their performance over the last few years. In 2011, their results are only slightly lower when compared with pupils not receiving free school meals.

By eleven years of age, many pupils are confident, independent learners with sound skills in numeracy and literacy in Welsh and English. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Nearly all pupils feel safe and receive very good support in school. This promotes their well-being, their progress and their academic achievement. They feel that the school deals well with all incidents, including bullying. Nearly all understand what is required to keep healthy and they take part in the regular exercise opportunities provided by the school.

Behaviour and self-discipline in lessons and around the school is very good. All pupils are eager to learn and show a good level of motivation in class and during a wide range of extra-curricular activities. A very high proportion take part in school clubs, teams, music groups and shows. They show enthusiasm in a very good range of activities to support local and national charities during the lunch hour and after school.

Pupils and teachers plan together the content and methods of learning. Pupils benefit greatly from the enquiry based methods used in all classes to improve their thinking skills. This approach promotes their enjoyment in their work and develops positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils' attendance is gradually improving and at slightly over 93% is very similar to the levels of attendance for other schools in the local authority and nationally. Nevertheless, and despite all the efforts of staff, the attendance rates for the last three years place the school among the lowest 50% of schools in similar social and economic circumstances.

Many pupils have very good social and life skills. They accept responsibility for their work and actions and show respect and care towards others. They take part in a wide range of community activities, including the effective school council, which has representation on the local community youth council and the governing body. Members have contributed to the process of appointing staff and to decisions regarding a number of improvements to the school environment.

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

The school has an appropriate curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. All teachers and classroom support assistants work well with each other and with pupils within their classes. Teaching and learning is based upon themes that respond very effectively to the Welsh Government's 2008 curriculum for schools. These changes are very effective in enthusing pupils and in developing their skills to get the most out of their learning.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities for sports and creative work and which enable pupils to use their Welsh outside the classroom.. Welsh clubs for parents are also organised.

Provision for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is excellent. Pupils are very proud of their Welsh identity. They can discuss knowledgeably elements of the work of poets, authors, artists and other famous Welsh people. They gain valuable experiences by collaborating with artists, authors, and musicians from Wales, in addition to competing annually in the Urdd Eisteddfod. Learning is reinforced very effectively by colourful and stimulating displays that inspire pupils to learn more about present day Wales as well as its heritage and history.

Provision to develop pupils' bilingual skills is excellent. By means of skilful planning across the school and the effective use of an enquiry based approach, teachers and support staff ensure good progress is made in pupils' listening, oral, reading and writing skills in Welsh and English. A prominent place is given to education for sustainable development and global citizenship in school themes. As a result, pupils are very aware of the importance of respecting and caring for the environment. The school recently received the second Eco School Green Banner on the basis of its recycling and energy conservation work.

Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their awareness and extend their knowledge of other areas of the world, for example, India and Bangladesh. The school regularly welcomes foreign visitors as part of developing an understanding of the wider world. Year six pupils visit France annually for a residential week. As the result of its work on global citizenship, the school was awarded the international schools' standard in 2011.

Teaching: Excellent

Enquiry approaches and thinking skills are used very effectively to develop pupils' wider skills at all ages and abilities. These methods have a very positive impact on standards, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Teachers plan lessons carefully. They share the aim with pupils at the beginning of the lesson and discuss success criteria. They also plan very well for the classroom assistants' role to ensure pupils have good learning support. Teachers and learning support assistants are good language role models.

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Through very good and excellent teaching pupils are provided with the skills that enable them to get on effectively with their learning without depending too much on adult advice. Many are able to use their existing knowledge and skills to solve new problems. A very good work ethic exists in all classes, where pupils work well as individuals and in groups.

The school makes excellent use of an electronic 'live' on-line assessment programme to identify pupils' learning needs, to track their progress and to challenge individuals of all abilities to reach their potential. Older pupils also contribute to evaluating their own work and the work of others in the group by identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

Assessment records are updated daily or weekly according to need. They inform teachers and pupils alike of the next steps in the learning. The assessment system is used to produce reports to parents on their children's progress and to compare their attainment with the remaining pupils in the class in a sensitive and appropriate manner. The information is transferred to the secondary school at the end of Year six to ensure continuity and progression in skills and knowledge.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is a friendly and caring community and all members of staff promote high values. There is a very inclusive ethos. The provision for moral, social, cultural and spiritual development is very good. Pupils show respect for each other and for possessions. There is an appropriate reverence in the daily act of collective worship. Pupils contribute well to religious services and have an opportunity to reflect on the message that is presented.

The educational guidance provided is excellent and promotes pupil wellbeing by ensuring that they work to their targets, in order to move on quickly to the next stages in their learning. The importance of physical health is emphasised effectively through the curriculum. This is supported by good outdoor play facilities and by pupils having equal opportunity to join in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The school liaises with many specialist agencies, such as the police, health services and social services when necessary.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including the most able and talented pupils, is very good. The special needs teacher's expertise is used effectively and the curriculum meets the particular needs of specific groups and individuals and offers a personal programme for those with specific needs. This involves individual plans for relevant pupils and regular reviews of their work that includes parents and themselves as part of the process. As a result, pupils are very aware of what is expected of them.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community, where pupils have equal access to all areas of learning and provision. Clear emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and

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celebrating diversity. This is done effectively by means of a good personal and social education programme and through varied work, including links with locations in India and Bangladesh.

An extensive supply of good quality resources is matched to pupils' learning needs. Recently the school invested generously in additional resources, including books, new computers and information and communication technology equipment. Full use is made of these resources and those available in the community to support and enrich pupils' learning experiences.

The school is on an extensive site of approximately five and a half acres. The one old wooden main building and four other buildings, including a kitchen, are in a poor condition and not very suitable for education in the twenty-first century.

Toilet facilities are inadequate for staff and pupils. There are no toilets in the main building and pupils must cross the yard in all kinds of weather to use the facilities.

Access to the outside buildings is unsuitable for individuals with mobility problems because of the steep steps, which also pose a potential daily hazard for reception class pupils and others who use them to reach the kitchen at lunch time. The school yard is on a steep slope and unsuitable for many outdoor activities. However, good use is made of the land and field around the school for outdoor lessons, especially for Foundation Phase pupils.

The local authority is committed to improving the school site in the near future.

A health and safety issue relating to parents parking their cars at the start and end of the school day was raised with the governing body.

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

The head teacher provides very effective leadership. He ensures that the impact of every aspect and initiative undertaken by the school has a clear and positive influence on pupils' standards.

The school has an effective staffing structure. This includes an experienced deputy head teacher and other members of the senior management team who work well together. Senior staff have established a clear and appropriate vision for the school, which is shared and promoted by all.

Staff meetings focus on the process of school improvement and outcomes lead to action points to improve practice. Decisions made previously are reviewed regularly to inform progress. Performance management is effective and contributes significantly to the high quality of teaching and to improvement in pupils' standards.

The governing body provides effective support. They have a very good understanding of the way the school is performing when compared to similar schools. Governors are aware of the issues arising from data analysis and the school's own

self-evaluation. They regularly use this information to challenge the school in areas it needs to improve on.

Three members of the governing body are governors at the secondary school to which pupils transfer at eleven years of age. These arrangements help to ensure that pupils settle in quickly to their new school and that they continue to make good progress in their learning.

The governors have appropriate policies to undertake their statutory duties. They also give full attention to relevant legislation and guidance.

The school implements local and national priorities well. For example, appropriate attention is given to adopting and implementing principles and procedures from the School Effectiveness Framework, and, pupils' bilingual skills in Welsh and English are developed very successfully.

The school is frequently used by other schools in Wales and England to provide training for teachers on developing pupils' enquiry and thinking skills through themes rather than subjects. It is also used as a centre of excellence to train other schools on its electronic tracking, recording and reporting system on pupil attainment and achievement.

Improving quality: Excellent

The school's self-evaluation process is very effective and every member of staff contributes. The self-evaluation report is a useful and comprehensive document which focuses clearly on improving pupils' standards. It includes a thorough analysis of performance data, the monitoring of provision and a review of all aspects of the school's life and work.

The school has been very effective in ensuring continued improvement over a number of years. It has succeeded in making very good progress in implementing the recommendations of the previous inspection.

The school has established effective networks of professional practice in the school and with other schools and partners. Members of staff take advantage of all opportunities to develop their expertise and are very keen to take part in activities to improve their effectiveness.

Partnership working: Excellent

Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are very good and effectively contribute to realising the school's aims. Pupils regularly visit various sites within the village and often welcome individuals from the community to speak to them in school. This makes a positive contribution to enriching their learning experiences and their awareness of their locality, Wales and the wider world.

The school is working towards Investors in Families status. This is to help in working more effectively with vulnerable families in particular, in order to improve their children's wellbeing and achievement. Constructive links have been established with local businesses and higher education establishments.

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There is effective collaboration and planning between the school and the local secondary school that pupils transfer to at 11 years of age. This close working relationship helps ensure pupils make appropriate progress in the next stage of their learning in key stage three. The collaboration also prepares pupils to cope better with the type of international assessment methods such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA compares pupils' performance internationally at the end of compulsory education and focuses on the application of pupils' knowledge and skills in solving problems.

Resource management: Excellent

The head teacher and other staff manage all resources very efficiently and effectively. They ensure an appropriate level of staffing, so that teachers can deliver the curriculum effectively and make the best use of their time, expertise and experience. The school satisfies the requirements of the National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Addressing Teachers' Work Load'.

Maintenance of the accommodation is a daily challenge due to the poor state of the old buildings.. However, despite this, members of staff succeed in creating an attractive and stimulating learning environment in all classes and learning areas.

School expenditure decisions are linked well with priorities for improvement and pupils' wellbeing. Sharing resources with partners is a strength and leads to better outcomes for pupils.

Through the head teacher's consultative and training work on developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies, the school receives a substantial addition to its finances from a number of other schools and external agencies.

Ysgol Lôn Las has the lowest budget per pupil of the 86 primary schools in Swansea. In view of this, and since pupils attain good and excellent outcomes, the school gives excellent value for money.

Appendix 1

Comments on performance data

National Curriculum teacher assessment results show that over the last three years most pupils at seven years of age, at the end of key stage 1, attained the expected level 2 in Welsh, mathematics and science. Most pupils at eleven years of age, at the end of key stage 2 over the last two years attained the expected level 4 in Welsh, English, mathematics and science. These results places the school among the 25% best performing schools when compared to others in similar socio-economic circumstances.

The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 at seven years of age and level 5 at 11 years of age is comparatively high and close to or above 50%. It is the good performance of girls in both key stages that is responsible for this. Boys' achievement at these higher levels is significantly lower than that of the girls in all core subjects, particularly in 2011. It is also low when compared with boys' results in similar schools within the family, the local authority and nationally. However, in 2011 there was a high percentage of boys of 11 years of age in the school with additional learning needs. This was the main reason for the school's comparatively low results at level 5.

The gap in the performance of pupils receiving free school meals when compared to the remainder has reduced over the past few years. In 2011 their results are only slightly lower when compared with pupils not receiving free school meals.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty-six questionnaires were received and within nearly all of them parents state that their children enjoy going to school, are happy there and feel safe. They believe also that behaviour is good and that pupils are respected, learn to accept responsibility and develop well as independent learners.

Parents are all of the opinion that teachers work hard. They are very happy with the progress made by their children and the variety of activities offered to them. They feel that the school is well run and is very responsive to their requests and concerns.

Nearly all parents are happy with the information they receive on their children's progress and feel comfortable in coming to the school to discuss their children's development.

Some parents expressed concern regarding the poor condition of the school buildings.

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and four pupils from key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and members of the inspection team spoke with them during the inspection. All are of the opinion that they are treated with respect and say that they feel safe in school. They think that teachers give them good support and help them to know how well they are succeeding. They say that teachers teach them effectively about the importance of how to be healthy and provide them with skills that promote their independence.

The vast majority of pupils say that they know who they are able to talk to if they are worried about anything. A little over three-quarters think behaviour is good and that misbehaviour does not impact on their ability to work. Approximately 90% say that nearly all pupils behave well at play time and lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mr J R Jones	Reporting Inspector
Mr E Morgan	Team Inspector
Mrs M Howells	Team Inspector
Mr D Jones	Lay Inspector
Mr K Davies	Peer Inspector
Mr D Ellis	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