



A report on

**Ysgol Pencae
Ffordd Graiglwyd
Penmaenmawr
Conwy
LL34 6YG**

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Gwilym Trebor Roberts

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 Pencae is located in the village of Penmaenmawr in the county of Conwy. It is a Church-in-Wales Voluntary Controlled school. At present, 167 full-time pupils aged between 4-11 years attend the school while 24 three-year-old nursery aged children attend every afternoon. The school is arranged into eight classes, which have been streamed into classes in which either Welsh or English is the main medium of teaching from Y1 onwards.

Penmaenmawr is recognised as an area of economic disadvantage and 22% of pupils receive free school meals (FSM); this is higher than the county and national averages. The personal, language and mathematics skills of pupils are, on average, lower on entry to the school in comparison with local and county schools. Thirty five per cent of pupils have special educational needs (SEN), including three who have statements of SEN.

The school notes that very few pupils speak Welsh on entry to the school. A very small proportion of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or learn English as an additional language.

A county resource centre and an integrated centre are located on the site. Since the last inspection in 2004, two new classrooms have been added to the building. The present headteacher has been in post since 1998.

Ysgol Pencae's per capita budget is £4018* which compares with a maximum of £9816 and a minimum of £2909 for primary schools in the Conwy authority. The school has the 25th highest budget per pupil out of the 61 primary schools in the Conwy authority.

*The financial allocation for the school includes £81,905 for the county SEN resource centre located on the school site.

Summary

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

Current performance

This school is good because:

- most pupils achieve good standards;
- good attention is paid to pupils' wellbeing;
- pupils benefit from an engaging and varied curriculum;
- most of the teaching is good;
- there is a very welcoming ethos which ensures that all pupils are happy and safe at school;
- the governing body knows the school well and challenges decisions.

Prospects for improvement

The inspection team is confident that the school will be able to make further improvements because:

- there has been an improvement over the last two years in the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 1 and end of key stage 2 assessment results have generally been good over the last three years;
- the school is led effectively and has a strong ethos of teamwork;
- the school's self-evaluation arrangements are good and the findings are used to plan and implement improvement.

Recommendations

In order to continue to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 improve the achievement of a minority of pupils who make adequate progress in the basic skills, especially in Y1 and Y2;
- R2 improve the Welsh language development of the pupils who study Welsh as a second language and complete plans for doing so;
- R3 improve handwriting and presentation of work throughout the school;
- R4 continue to develop pupils' thinking skills and their ability to contribute to the assessment process.

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

The school's performance at the end of key stage 1 over the last three years has fluctuated. In the previous two years, performance was generally in the third and fourth quartiles, however results improved considerably in 2010 and are now good. Ninety four point one per cent of the cohort achieved the core subject indicator (CSI), namely level 2 (the expected level) or above, in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined, in 2010. This is better than the average of similar schools placed in the same "family" according to the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) statistics. It is also better than the average performance of schools within the local authority (LA) and Wales. It places the school in the highest 25% of similar schools in terms of the number of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM). Performance in the individual core subjects was also good. They were all higher than the average performance of the LA, Wales and similar schools placed in the same family according to WAG statistics. Performance in English, mathematics and science was in the highest 50% when comparing with similar schools in terms of the number of pupils entitled to FSM, whilst the result in Welsh was in the highest 25% when comparing with the same schools. Over a period of three years, performance at Level 3, namely one level higher than expected, was only achieved in mathematics.

The results of teacher assessments at the end of key stage 2 have been good overall over the last three years. The results of the CSI and of the core subjects, namely English, Welsh, mathematics and science were mostly in the top 50%, with the result for Welsh in 2010 being in the top 25% of schools, when comparing with similar schools in terms of the number entitled to FSM. Only English results in 2008 and 2009 and the CSI result in 2008 have been in the bottom 50% when compared with the same schools. In 2010, the results for the CSI, and the results of the individual core subjects are better than the average results of similar schools placed in the same "family" according to WAG statistics, and also the average results of schools within the LA and Wales. Nevertheless, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5, namely one level higher than expected has fallen for every subject in 2010 and the percentage is now lower in every subject than the performance of similar schools placed in the same "family" according to WAG statistics, and also the average results of similar schools within the LA and Wales. No pupil has attained the higher level in Welsh for four years.

With the exception of Welsh, girls perform better in general than boys in key stage 1. There is no significant pattern of a difference between the boys' and girls' performance in key stage 2. There is no significant difference between the performance of pupils who receive FSM and that of other pupils. Most pupils with SEN achieve well, and some who were once on the SEN register have achieved the CSI at the end of Key Stage 2.

Many pupils in the Foundation Phase, key stage 1 and key stage 2 make good progress in their lessons. Almost all pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners who

enjoy life at school. Pupils' ability to stay on task and to work in a group is good and sometimes very good. Many pupils make good progress from one key stage to the other. However, the progress of a minority of pupils, mainly in Y1 and Y2, is satisfactory.

In the Welsh first language classes, most pupils listen well and many speak well in a wide range of contexts. The reading and writing skills of most of these pupils in Welsh are good.

In the classes where English is the main medium, the oral skills in English of many pupils are good.

By the end of key stage 2, in classes whether usually taught through the medium of Welsh or English, many pupils read English to an excellent standard. Many write well in English.

The handwriting and presentation of work of a minority of pupils across the school is untidy.

The standards of achievement of many key stage 2 pupils in information and communication technology is excellent.

The standard of the Welsh language development of pupils who study Welsh as a second language is adequate. Most of these pupils understand simple instructions and respond appropriately to them and the teachers' incidental use of Welsh but their progress in oral, reading and writing skills in Welsh is very gradual. Consequently, their ability to use the Welsh language at the age of 11 is adequate.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' wellbeing is good. Most of the pupils have a good awareness of keeping healthy and they feel safe.

Attendance rates of 94.4% are good and compare well with similar schools within the county and Wales. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are always courteous and show respect, care and concern for others and for members of staff.

Most pupils enjoy school and feel valued and supported. They are enthusiastic, work hard and contribute well to the various activities.

Members of the School Council and Eco Club are very active and are willing to make decisions and to represent pupils' views. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities.

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

The school provides a good range of learning experiences. Learning activities are further enhanced through a good range of activities including fieldwork and interesting practical activities. All teachers plan lessons and activities that are

appropriate overall, but there is a lack of challenge in the expectations for some pupils who underachieve, especially in Y1 and Y2.

The plans and provision for developing pupils' key skills are good. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills across the curriculum in key stage 2. Planning for numeracy and communication skills is good. Teachers have started to incorporate activities in the schemes of work, which stimulate pupils' thinking.

The plans and provision for developing Welsh as a first language are good but the arrangements for Welsh second language are adequate. The revised plans have not, to date, had a significant impact on pupils' standards of achievement. In the stream where Welsh is studied as a second language, teachers' use of incidental Welsh is good. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about their local area and about the art, music and culture of Wales.

By promoting initiatives such as recycling, gardening and healthy eating, the school promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship successfully. The school has achieved the bronze Eco School award. The weeks which celebrate different countries pay good attention to the foods, lifestyles and characteristics of different countries and promote pupils' understanding of the lifestyles of different parts of the world well.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good across the school. In the few lessons where teaching is excellent, pupils work independently to produce work of a good standard; they also select suitable success criteria for the task and use these to evaluate their progress. Where teaching is good, teachers have a good understanding of the curriculum, they explain new concepts clearly, they motivate pupils effectively and there is a good pace to lessons. In the few sessions where teaching is adequate, presentations are too long, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently and pupils do not learn enough during the session.

The school has clear and efficient systems to assess pupils' progress. Standardised tests are used as well as teacher assessments to set challenging and realistic targets. Reports to parents are detailed and meet the requirements, however a few parents, especially those whose children are in the early years, say that they are impersonal.

Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of the lessons' learning objectives. They often set success criteria and many pupils discuss these when completing an unit of work. Pupils' written work is marked regularly and constructive comments are made on some pieces of work. There are very few examples of pupils being challenged to improve their own work and that of their peers.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for pupils' health and wellbeing is good. The school promotes effectively learning about healthy living, including emphasising the importance of

healthy eating and regular exercise. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a wide range of learning experiences. Useful information is available for pupils and parents about the life of the school. This includes the school prospectus, regular newsletters and the governors' annual report. The school offers good support for pupils and makes effective use of the professional support of specialist agencies. The school responds effectively to any enquiries or concerns about the wellbeing and safety of pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Teachers identify pupils' learning needs quickly and there are good links with specialist agencies in order to support and promote these pupils' development. Individual education plans (IEP) are of good quality for pupils with specific special needs and also for those who are more able and talented. The IEPs are reviewed on a regular basis.

Learning environment: Good

The school ensures equal opportunity for all pupils. The curriculum is completely accessible for all pupils, regardless of their gender, race or religion. Stairs make access to parts of the building difficult for pupils and adults in wheelchairs.

The building provides a suitable environment for learning and delivering the full curriculum. The hall is suitable for physical education work and school assemblies. There is enough space for pupils to play on a hard playground but the field is wet at times.

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

The head teacher has a good understanding of the school's needs. Members of the management team work in close collaboration to set a direction for the work of the school, and teamwork is encouraged and appreciated. All this has a positive impact on the school ethos.

The school pays good attention to Performance Management and its outcomes inform the School Development Plan [SDP]. Weekly staff meetings and training days for all members of staff provide good opportunities for everybody to discuss progress or acquire new skills.

The focus of strategic planning is to improve the school and to raise standards. The head teacher analyses performance data in order to identify areas for improvement. However, the manner in which teachers cater for the needs of some pupils who underachieve, mainly in Y1 and Y2, or plan for the development of some pupils in Welsh, does not promote pupils' progress effectively enough.

Governors undertake their roles and responsibilities conscientiously and they contribute effectively to set a direction for the work of the school. They are developing a good awareness of how the school performs by discussing data

analyses and through visits to discuss with subject and areas of learning co-ordinators. This helps the governors to fulfil their role as a critical friend effectively.

The school meets local and national priorities well. The school promotes sustainability and global citizenship well. The school was awarded the Sports Active Mark as well as the Basic Skills Cymru Quality Standard and the bronze Eco School award.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation process is comprehensive; a wide range of evidence is used as part of the process. The role and contribution of all staff to the arrangements is clear. The contributions of subject co-ordinators and the management team are perceptive and contribute towards raising standards. Recently, good attention has been given to pupils' and parents' views.

The school has a three year overview of the areas that it has identified for improvement. These are noted in the annual SDP. All members of staff are involved in producing the SDP. This, however, notes too many priorities. However, the cost, timetable and responsibilities of staff in responding to every priority have been clearly noted.

Good progress has been made in responding to the recommendations identified in the 2004 inspection, with the exception of developing enterprise.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a range of useful strategic partnerships. There is a good relationship with parents. Parents help with reading lessons and sports and play an active role in discussing their children's targets for improvement, especially in key stage 2. There are also close links with the local community, which have a positive impact on the quality of education. The school is well supported by the LA's education service. Links with various charities and agencies promote the wellbeing of pupils well.

The school collaborates well with local primary and secondary schools to standardise assessments and moderate pupils' work at the end of key stage 2.

The school co-operates with local primary schools to share experiences and exchange practice. The school collaborates effectively with local secondary schools to prepare older pupils effectively for the next stage of learning. These arrangements contribute well to strengthening the culture of collaboration within the school and between schools on professional matters.

Resource management: Good

All teachers have appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum effectively. Support staff are used well and work effectively alongside teachers in the classroom.

There are effective Performance Management arrangements in place. The school provides planning, preparation and assessment time for all teachers. Moreover, the school ensures appropriate non-contact time for the head teacher so that she can fulfil her managerial duties. The deputy head teacher also has non-contact time to fulfil her

managerial duties. The school has good resources that are used effectively to support the teaching and learning.

There is a clear link between expenditure and the priorities in the SDP and managers monitor and control expenditure to ensure that it stays within budget. The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty eight parents completed the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed positive views about the school. Most parents are satisfied with the school and say their children enjoy being there, and that they feel confident that their children are safe at school. Most parents were of the opinion that teaching was good and that their children receive appropriate extra support. Most parents think the school is well run and find staff approachable if they have any questions or concerns. Many of them think that they are kept regularly informed about their children's progress. Many also feel that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

All pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Most pupils feel that they are safe in school. Many say that the school deals well with bullying and almost all know whom to approach if they are worried or concerned. Almost all say that the school teaches them how to stay healthy and that there are many opportunities for them to take regular exercise. Most think that they are doing well in school and almost all say that teachers and other adults help them to learn and to make progress. Most pupils know what to do and who to talk to if they find their work difficult. They also say that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. Most say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. Many say that other children behave well so that they can get their work done and also that almost all pupils behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Mr Gwilym Trebor Roberts	Reporting Inspector <i>Standards; Learning Experiences; Leadership</i>
Mr Phil Mostert	Team Inspector Teaching; Improving Quality; Partnership Working
Mr Richard Parry Hughes	Lay Inspector Learning environment
Mrs Edna Davies	Peer Inspector Wellbeing; Care, Support and Guidance; Resource management
Ms Sian Hughes Evans	School Nominee

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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