



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 Castell-nedd
Woodland Road
Neath
SA11 3AL**

Date of inspection: November 2012

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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

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Context

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell-nedd is a designated Welsh-medium school that serves Neath. There are 295 full-time pupils at the school, and 56 part-time, nursery age pupils. Children are taught in six classes in the Foundation Phase and in seven classes in key stage 2. The school indicates that they come from a variety of backgrounds; some are privileged and others are underprivileged.

Seventy-two per cent of pupils come from homes where English is the main language. A very few pupils come from ethnic backgrounds and 12.5% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is considerably lower than the national average.

At present, 18% of pupils are on the additional educational needs register and no pupils have a statement of educational needs.

The school was last inspected in 2006 under the leadership of the same headteacher. A new deputy headteacher was appointed for the Autumn term 2012 following the promotion of the previous deputy.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell-nedd in 2012-2013 is £2,972. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £7,410 and the minimum is £2,806. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell-nedd is in 64th position of the 68 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot in terms of its school 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:

- a homely, caring and industrious ethos exists, which promotes respect, good behaviour, courtesy and a healthy attitude towards learning;
- teachers' assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 on the whole compare well with the results of similar schools;
- the school has efficient systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress, which leads to effective planning;
- the school provides particularly good support for pupils who have additional learning needs, including those who are more able and talented; and
- most pupils make good progress and, at times, very good progress during their period at school.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a strong vision for developing the school as a caring community that gives priority to pupils' wellbeing and development;
- leaders have high expectations and there are effective procedures in place to monitor the provision's standards and effectiveness across the school;
- the school has a clear management structure and responsibilities are distributed effectively;
- the main outcomes of the self-evaluation process have a direct influence on the priorities that are identified in the school development plan; and
- the governing body acts as a critical friend and governors have a clear agreed sense of purpose and direction.

Recommendations

- R1 Share best practice in teaching across all classes
- R2 Continue to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners
- R3 Continue to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship and the wider world

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

Nearly all pupils across the school strive hard in lessons and make good progress in their learning. Many children concentrate and persevere with tasks, discuss their work confidently and know what they need to do to improve.

Although almost all pupils come from non-Welsh speaking homes, nearly all, from an early age, communicate orally confidently in Welsh and English. Nearly all pupils make good progress in their ability to apply their literacy and communication skills in addition to their numeracy and information and communication technology skills. This progress, across all areas of the curriculum, is in line with their age and ability.

Most pupils develop to be confident learners and they can work effectively as individuals, in pairs or groups or as individuals to respond appropriately to a task. However, most have not developed as independent learners that can lead their own learning.

Most pupils' reading skills are developing well. By the time they reach key stage 2, the majority of them can read fluently, accurately and intelligently in Welsh and English. The best pupils use intonation to convey meaning very effectively when reading aloud. They can discuss the content of books successfully and use their reading skills skilfully to discover information for their work in activities across the curriculum.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils can write accurately and for a number of purposes. The most skilful writers are beginning to maintain, develop and extend their ideas when presenting extended and imaginative pieces.

The proportion of pupils in the Foundation Phase who achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5) or higher in 2012 in Welsh language, literacy and communication skills was higher than the average for schools in the family. Pupils' performance at the school in mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity was a little lower than the average for the family. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher level (outcome 6) was considerably higher than the average for the schools in the family. Pupils' performance in the Foundation Phase in the three areas placed the school among the top 50% in the group.

In key stage 2, pupils' achievement is good in relation to attaining the expected level in a combination of Welsh, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4) or higher has been higher than the average percentages for the schools in the family in combination in four of the last five years. Results for English, Welsh, and mathematics in 2012 were higher than the average percentages for the family. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher level (level 5) in each of the subjects was much better than the family average. Pupils' achievement in higher levels in Welsh, English and mathematics placed the school among the top 25% of its family and among the top 50% for science.

Pupils who have additional learning needs, including those who are more able and talented, make very good progress. There is no obvious pattern to suggest that there is a difference between the boys' and girls' performance.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know to whom to turn if they are anxious about anything. All pupils are courteous and children's behaviour during lessons and in informal situations is excellent. They respond respectfully to adults and peers and this is a strength throughout the school. A 'Bytis Bach a Mawr' system gives very good opportunities to enable older pupils to look after younger ones.

Most pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy by eating sensibly and taking part in physical exercise lessons and activities. They feel that the school deals well with all events, including bullying.

Many pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work and nearly all are willing learners. Although most pupils show obvious motivation in their learning, they do not contribute enough to planning what they learn by taking responsibility and making decisions.

Pupils' contribution receives good attention at the school. The school council offers appropriate opportunities to contribute to school life and it has made decisions about a number of improvements to the school environment.

Pupils' attendance places the school among the bottom 50% of similar schools on the basis of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Pupils' punctuality when arriving at school is good.

Through a wide range of activities in the school, in addition to extra-curricular experiences, pupils develop a good range of social and life skills.

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

The school provides an appropriate range of learning experiences that respond fully to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education.

Curriculum planning is good. Joint, regular planning by all staff helps to provide a wide and balanced curriculum. Regular co-operation between teaching staff and support staff strengthens the learning experiences that are provided.

The variety of activities that is offered to pupils ensures opportunities to build on their skills and previous knowledge successfully. Provision ensures that pupils develop numeracy, communication and information technology skills well. However, as a result of a lack of planning of sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently, provision for developing thinking skills is not as effective.

The school plans a wide variety of interesting and relevant opportunities for developing the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension. This is a strength across the school.

Provision related to eco-projects and Healthy Schools encourages pupils to consider sustainable development effectively. However, the school has not ensured adequate attention for provision for global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

There is an industrious and happy ethos in the school and a very good working relationship between staff and pupils. In the best lessons that were observed, exciting provision was seen that has maintained pupils' interest. Tasks appeal to them, including those who have additional learning needs, and meet all individuals' requirements. Staff model language well and correct pupils' oral work in a sensitive manner. On the whole, classroom management is good in the majority of lessons.

Where teaching is good or excellent, differentiation is effective and questioning is probing. Good oral feedback is given on their work and there are regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own work. These lessons have been prepared thoroughly and organised effectively with clear learning objectives. A variety of good quality resources is used.

In a minority of lessons where teaching is not as good, planning is superficial and expectations are low. Opportunities for pupils to improve their own work are inconsistent in these lessons.

The school has efficient systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress. The school makes effective use of assessments to track pupils' progress and to provide additional support as necessary. The quality of reports for parents is good and they meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy community that gives priority to pupils' wellbeing and safety. It has comprehensive procedures and close and effective links with health and welfare services, the police, the school nurse and social services. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to express an opinion and to offer ideas on how to improve the school. The school council has developed a code of conduct for the school yard, which is visible to all children and this has a strong influence on pupils' behaviour on the yard.

The school promotes all its pupils' moral and social development on a daily basis through fostering values such as fairness and respect in all activities. Pupils are encouraged to be proud of their community.

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

There are appropriate policies and thorough procedures in place for additional learning needs and they are implemented fully. Effective arrangements exist for supporting all pupils who have been identified as having additional learning needs. The school has identified more able and talented pupils and provides well for them.

Learning environment: Good

There is an inclusive ethos at the school and there is an appropriate range of policies and procedures in place to promote equality and equal rights to the curriculum. It is a caring community that provides equal opportunities for pupils to all the school's activities. Emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

The school's buildings offer enough room for the school's activities and good use is made of them. The outdoor area is attractive but limited for the numbers of children. There are enough resources in all areas to promote learning and teaching. The learning environment is attractive and has colourful displays that show respect for pupils' work. Buildings and grounds are well maintained.

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

The headteacher has a strong vision for developing the school as a caring and child-centred community. He conveys the vision effectively to all stakeholders. The school's aims and objectives are clear and are a firm foundation for all its activities. The school has a clear management structure, and responsibilities have been allocated effectively. All members of staff have an appropriate job description and they all understand fully their roles and responsibilities within the system.

Leaders have high expectations and effective procedures are in place to monitor standards and the effectiveness of provision across the school.

Members of the governing body shoulder their responsibilities very effectively and understand their role well. Individuals' roles and responsibilities within the body are clear. The body is very aware of the school's performance and contributes effectively to the self-evaluation process and planning for improvement. Governors interpret appropriate data, visit classes regularly, attend educational visits and contribute actively to the school's internal committees. This enables them to act effectively as critical friends.

The school meets national and local priorities well and has been a part of a Foundation Phase pilot scheme from the beginning. The rights of the child are promoted successfully, in addition to initiatives such as Eco Schools, Healthy Schools and Fair Trade. These have a positive effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation report is comprehensive and reflects strengths and areas to be developed appropriately. It was produced by the headteacher and there was significant input from the senior management team and governors.

The school has a comprehensive and effective procedure for implementing the self-evaluation process. It includes data analysis, observing learning and teaching and seeking the opinions of staff, parents, governors and pupils. The main outcomes of this process influence directly the priorities that are identified in the school development plan.

The school development plan, which is of good quality, was produced on the basis of the previous plan and the priorities that emerged within the self-evaluation process. These priorities also consider national and local priorities, for example literacy. Targets are sensible and include quantitative criteria where appropriate.

The school has responded well to the recommendations that were identified within the last inspection report.

Teachers belong to a number of networks of professional practice within the institution and with other Welsh-medium schools in the area. These networks have a positive influence on planning, moderating assessments and on developing other teaching strategies and principles.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents and the community are good. Parents are supportive of all the activities that are provided and take pride in the school's 'open door' policy.

They receive information regularly about their children's progress and they are happy with many aspects of school life. The school has a useful and beneficial partnership with the Parent Teacher Association, which raises money to improve educational provision in order to raise standards.

There are effective arrangements to ensure that pupils settle in well as they go from the nursery phase to full-time education.

Good, close links with the secondary school promote improvements in standardising and moderating pupils' work. There are effective and convenient transition arrangements in order to promote pupils' wellbeing as they transfer from primary school to secondary school and to ensure that they prepare for the next stage of their education.

Visits to the community and visitors from the community make positive contributions to enriching pupils' experiences. Through pupils' performances in the community, they raise money for appropriate charities and raise their awareness of other people's needs well.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources well and expenditure is monitored regularly and appropriately. The school has an appropriate supply of resources, teachers and support staff in order to teach the curriculum effectively. Classroom assistants fulfil their role well and make an important contribution to the life and work of the school. Efficient use is made of individuals' expertise, qualifications and experience, for

example when exchanging classes for specific areas of the curriculum. Teachers make effective use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment. The school has an appropriate system for performance management that offers opportunities for continuous professional development.

The governing body keeps a close eye on the budget. They spend in line with the priorities of the school development plan and ensure that there is not too much money in reserve.

The school provides good value for money, considering most pupils' progress, as well as prudent use of funding.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The Foundation Phase

By the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, pupils' results at the expected level (Outcome 5 or higher) in the Foundation Phase Outcomes Indicator were a little lower than the average for pupils in other schools in the family. However, results for the Indicator were higher than the average for the whole of Wales. Pupils' achievements in language, literacy and communication were higher than the averages for the family of schools and the whole of Wales. Their results in mathematical development were a little lower than the averages for the family. In personal and social development, pupils' results were also a little below the averages for the family of schools, but higher than national averages.

Pupils' results in terms of achieving a higher level than expected (outcome 6) were much higher than the average for the family and schools in Wales in all areas.

There are a few differences between the performance of boys and girls who achieve outcome 5. Boys achieve better than girls in language, literacy communication, which is contrary to the national picture. Differences are much more inconsistent in achieving outcome 6. In general, girls of higher ability perform much better than boys of higher ability in language, literacy and communication skills, in addition to personal and social development. However, the opposite is true of mathematical development.

Key stage 2

The proportion of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher in Welsh or English, mathematics and science has been equal to or higher than the averages for the family and the averages for schools in Wales in four of the last five years.

In 2012, pupils' achievement at level 4 in English, Welsh and mathematics was much higher than the averages for the family and schools in Wales. The proportion of pupils who achieved level 4 in science was a little lower than the average for the family, but higher than the average for schools in the whole of Wales.

Pupils' performance at the school over the last five years has been inconsistent. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in 2011 was lower than the average for the family in all subjects. Results in English, Welsh, mathematics and science placed the school among the lower 50% in 2011. The school has made significant progress in the last year. In comparison with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who receive free school meals, pupils' attainment in English, Welsh and mathematics placed it among the top 50% of the group, although performance in science, although showing progress, continues to place the school among the lower 50%. English is the subject that performs best and nearly all pupils attain level 4 or better in oracy, reading and writing.

Boys' achievement is a little higher than that of girls in Welsh, mathematics and science for level 4. The percentage of boys who achieve level 5 in comparison with

girls is more significant in all subjects and the greatest difference can be seen in mathematics.

Many pupils who have additional learning needs, in addition to those who receive free school meals, make good progress in Welsh, English and mathematics during their school career.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and four pupils responded to the questionnaire. Nearly all responses are very positive and there are no typical differences between boys' and girls' responses. In general, most of the positive responses were higher than average for primary schools in Wales.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school, and believe that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. If they find their work difficult, nearly all pupils know what to do, and to whom to speak. When there are cases of bullying, nearly all children are confident that the school deals well with every case and they know to whom to speak if they are worried or anxious. Nearly all pupils believe that they are doing well at school, and that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. However, a few pupils believe that the homework that is set does not help them to understand their work at school.

Many say that other children behave well and that they can do their work. Most also think that children behave well at play time and lunch time. Many believe that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that there are many opportunities for regular physical exercise at school.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eighty-two responses were received to parent questionnaires. Nearly all parents express a high level of satisfaction with the school. The proportion of positive responses in almost all cases is considerably higher than national comparisons.

All parents feel that staff expect children to work hard and do their best. Nearly all parents believe that their children are treated with respect and feel safe at school. Nearly all agree that the school is led effectively, and are happy with the quality of teaching. Nearly all are satisfied with children's behaviour at the school and agree that there is a good variety of activities, including trips and visits.

A very few parents feel that they do not receive enough information about their child's progress. In addition, a very few parents feel that homework does not build enough on the work done at school. Nearly all parents understand the school's system for raising a complaint, and indicate that they feel comfortable about asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem.

Nearly all parents say that their children like school, make good progress and that staff helped them to settle in well as they started school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dyfrig Wyn Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Huw Watkins	Team Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Annwen Watkins	Peer Inspector
Tudur Jones	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

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

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11