



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 Gwaelod y Garth Primary School
Main Road
Gwaelod y Garth
Cardiff
CF15 9HJ**

Date of inspection: January 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 Gwaelod y Garth is a dual-stream community school which provides its pupils with education through the medium of Welsh or English depending on parental choice. The school is situated in the village of Gwaelod y Garth, some seven miles from Cardiff. The school serves a catchment area comprising of Gwaelod y Garth, Taff's Well, Tongwynlais and Nantgarw, and is neither economically advantaged nor disadvantaged.

The school has 254 pupils aged three to 11 on roll, including 39 children in the nursery. Twenty-four children attend the nursery in the morning and 15 in the afternoon. There are eight classes in the Welsh-medium stream, all of which are single age classes. The two classes in the English-medium stream have mixed ages. Four per cent of pupils are currently entitled to free school meals, which is much less than the average for Wales (21%).

The school has identified 10% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is well below the average for Wales. Pupil ethnicity is largely white British (93%) and the remainder either mixed or Chinese. Around 24% of pupils speak Welsh at home. Seven pupils have English as an additional language.

The present headteacher took up his post in January 2009.

The individual school budget for Ysgol Gynradd Gwaelod y Garth in 2012-2013 is £4,018 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £12,307 and the minimum is £2,873. Ysgol Gynradd Gwaelod y Garth is 28th out of the 99 primary schools in Cardiff 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:

- nearly all pupils make good progress during their time in school;
- the behaviour and attitudes to learning of nearly all pupils are a strong feature;
- the high quality of support and guidance has a very positive impact on pupils' standards, self-esteem and wellbeing;
- teachers provide stimulating learning experiences for pupils; and
- teaching is effective throughout the school.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a very clear and shared vision for the school;
- each member of the senior management team has clear responsibilities and they work well together and with the headteacher;
- the school's self-evaluation procedures are robust and inclusive;
- the governing body acts as a well-informed and critical friend to the school's leadership team and contributes effectively to the self-evaluation process;
- the school has been effective in ensuring improvement for pupils over recent years; and
- the school development plan has clear and appropriate priorities for improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Formalise the planning for skills to ensure progression in the provision across the school
- R2 Share the best practice in assessment for learning strategies
- R3 Ensure that pupils have opportunities to respond to teacher feedback
- R4 Ensure that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged in Welsh second language
- R5 Ensure that targets and success criteria in the school improvement plan are specific and measureable

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make good progress during their time at the school. They achieve good standards of work in lessons and in their books.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils have literacy skills that are appropriate for their age and a minority exceed the expectations. Pupils learn letters quickly, develop their listening and speaking skills and learn to write confidently from an early age. Most write in a number of genres and use good handwriting skills to produce extended pieces of work with appropriate punctuation. The presentation of the work is good. Most pupils are confident readers.

Pupils continue to make progress through key stage 2 and use both English and Welsh effectively in language lessons and their work across the curriculum. They have good speaking and listening skills and write well in a number of genres. Most write extensively in paragraphs that are correctly punctuated and well presented. Almost all read fluently and are able to discuss the plot and predict what will happen next. They read a range of written materials and are able to discuss their favourite authors and books. Almost all have good spelling skills at the end of key stage 2.

In Welsh second language most pupils speak, read and write with developing accuracy, appropriate to their age and ability. However, the ablest pupils do not always speak or write extendedly.

In both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, pupils' numeracy skills are developing well. Information and communication technology skills are generally good throughout the school and by the end of key stage 2 all pupils use their skills effectively for a range of purposes.

All additional learning needs pupils make good progress against the targets set for them and many make better than expected progress.

In the Foundation Phase, 92% of the pupils achieved the expected outcome in 2012 in relation to the development of their language, mathematical and personal skills. This is significantly higher than the average for the family of similar schools.

In relation to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, its performance in 2012 placed it in the top 25% for the development of the pupils' personal skills, in the top 50% for the development of their language skills, but in the lower 50% for the development of their mathematical skills.

At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level or above in English or Welsh, mathematics and science was just below the family average in 2012 but higher than the family average in the previous four years.

In the last four years the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5) has been above the family average, and in 2012 the school was in the top 25% in English, mathematics and science, and in the top 50% in Welsh.

In 2012, in relation to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 placed the school in the top 25% for Welsh and science, in the lower 50% for English and in the lowest 25% for mathematics and the core subject indicator at key stage 2.

In relation to the relative performance of boys and girls there is very little difference in those achieving the expected outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils have positive attitudes to keeping healthy and safe and they understand the importance of eating a healthy diet and taking exercise. Pupils feel safe and secure in the school.

Attendance is good. The school's attendance rate has been among the top 50% over the last three years, compared with that of similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

The behaviour of pupils is a strong feature of the school. All pupils are respectful of each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. Pupils enjoy participating in the work of the school on a range of issues. They feel encouraged to liaise with the headteacher and staff with their concerns and express their views about the school well through the work of the school council and eco committee.

The school council meets regularly and does its work very conscientiously and effectively. School council representatives act as ambassadors who have an important role to play in helping the school. The eco council have discussed how to improve safety outside the school gates with representatives from the city council.

By taking part in and contributing to a wide range of social events and activities pupils have a strong awareness of the local area and community.

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

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

The broad range of school visits, such as to places of historical importance in the area, complement the school curriculum and enrich the learning experience for the pupils. Parents and local residents are frequent visitors to the school and expand the learning opportunities for pupils.

Teacher planning ensures that lessons are stimulating and that there is progression in pupils' learning. Theme based schemes of work ensure that all areas of the curriculum are addressed, and their use is consistent across the school. They include appropriate provision for pupils of all abilities.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of Welsh culture through a good range of activities in the classroom and extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils have opportunities to take part in a variety of Urdd activities. However, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to extend their Welsh second language skills, through more challenging language work

Opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills across the curriculum are generally appropriate. However, the planning does not always ensure progression and continuity in skills across the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

The provision for global citizenship is developing well and the school promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development through the work of its eco club and eco committee. Pupils develop their understanding of the individual's rights and responsibilities well through the implementation of the school's respect and relationship policy.

Teaching: Good

Teachers ensure that most pupils are well motivated and they show interest in their learning. All teachers and support staff have a good working relationship with pupils.

Purposeful lesson plans and support from adults contribute effectively to the quality of the experiences offered to pupils. Teachers ensure that learning outcomes are clear in lessons. They use a range of teaching styles and resources effectively, and many of the activities are challenging and interesting.

In the very few lessons where the teaching is less effective, questioning is not always challenging or open-ended enough. In these lessons, the pace is too slow and there is not always appropriate work for all abilities

Teachers are beginning to use assessments of pupils' work to inform lesson planning and there is a suitable whole school marking policy. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is consistent and informs the pupils appropriately of what they need to do to improve their work. However pupils do not get enough opportunities to redraft and improve their written work.

The school has comprehensive tracking systems that allow teachers to identify pupils' attainment as well as the next steps in their education

The use of portfolios of pupils' work and the school's standardisation and moderation processes help teachers to level pupils' work accurately.

Reports on pupils' progress are appropriate and parents have the opportunity to respond in writing to them.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school acts as a caring community and, as a result, pupils feel safe and happy. There is a wide range of appropriate policies in place for promoting healthy living and pupils' wellbeing and to encourage pupil involvement in all aspects of school life and the wider community. The school is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school deals effectively with any bullying through a range of strategies that include a strong focus on children's rights and responsibilities.

Adults and pupils show respect for each other and, in activities such as structured circle time, pupils are given opportunities to discuss their feelings and emotional wellbeing. The school co-operates successfully with a range of external agencies to offer comprehensive care and education to pupils.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The school does its best to ensure that pupils' safety is paramount at all times. However, the confined space outside the school gates makes parking

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is strong. The school has clear procedures to identify pupils who are underachieving or require support. Early intervention ensures well-targeted support for pupils. The co-ordinator for additional learning needs and teachers set high expectations and work well together to ensure that each pupil has an individual education plan that meets his or her needs.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive, caring community. The homely, supportive ethos ensures that all pupils achieve and get along well together. All staff encourage pupils to show respect, care and concern towards themselves and others.

Pupils have a good relationship with their peers and the school's staff. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and boys and girls take part in all activities. The school has an effective policy to ensure equal opportunities and there is an appropriate accessibility policy and plan in place. The way in which the school ensures active involvement of all pupils in its provision, irrespective of their background, is a strength.

Respect for diversity and racial equality is embedded through personal and social education lesson plans. All staff promote personal and social values successfully.

The building and external facilities such as the exterior play and garden areas have been developed effectively to promote good outcomes for pupils. All areas of the school are clean and well maintained.

Pupils' work is displayed attractively on colourful and stimulating display boards and they contribute towards creating an interesting learning environment. They also provide useful information on the school's activities.

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

The headteacher provides effective leadership and management and among the priorities is to give every child the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential in all aspects of the curriculum. He has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by the senior management team, teaching and support staff and governors.

All members of the senior management team have clear responsibilities and work well together and with the headteacher. There is a clear sense of purpose, which is shared with all members of staff. As a result, there is a collaborative approach to leadership throughout the school. Clear management structures and regular meetings ensure that all staff contribute constructively to the school's priorities for development.

The governing body is fully committed to meeting its responsibilities. It has a good working knowledge of the school's performance data and its strengths, and offers an appropriate level of challenge. It acts as a well-informed and critical friend to the school's leadership team and contributes effectively to the self-evaluation process.

The school is working well to meet local and national priorities. The Foundation Phase is fully implemented and assessment for learning is developing. Literacy has been a high priority for action and professional learning communities are having a significant positive impact on provision.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is robust and well embedded. The school has ongoing, clear and purposeful processes to monitor and evaluate pupil standards and outcomes as well as provision. School leaders, teaching staff, governors, parents and pupils all contribute effectively to the process.

The self-evaluation report is a useful and comprehensive document, which focuses clearly on raising pupils' standards and improving provision. It includes a useful analysis of performance data and reviews all aspects of the school's life and work. As a result, the school has been effective in ensuring improvement over recent years and the impact on standards and wellbeing is clear.

The school has benefited from the work of networks of professional practice both within the school and with other schools and partners, particularly in improving teaching and developing assessment for learning. Members of staff take advantage of these opportunities to develop their expertise.

The school development plan is a detailed document that has a reasonable number of appropriate priorities. School leaders have defined suitable actions for these priorities and the responsibilities and financial implications are clear. However, targets for improvement do not have a clear enough focus on measurable outcomes.

Partnership working: Good

The school has an extensive range of partnerships. Use of the school's website, emails and text messaging ensures that there is effective communication with parents and they feel well informed about school life. Parents are very supportive of all school activities. The school's parent-teacher association is active and has made a significant contribution to purchasing resources.

The school also has strong links and effective transition arrangements with its receiving secondary schools. These links help older pupils prepare for the next stage in their learning. Teachers from the school and neighbouring primary schools work effectively with colleagues from the two secondary schools to ensure consistency in teacher assessment. Working with other schools, the school helps to fund two teachers who teach French to pupils across the phases.

Links with the community are strong and diverse. Pupils benefit from a range of outside visits and visitors to school. There are positive contacts with local businesses to promote pupils' understanding of the world of work.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its finances well. It prioritises and monitors expenditure carefully and resources the school's priorities appropriately. There is a good range of learning resources in the school. Standards of accommodation are good, and leaders manage them well. The school deploys its teaching and support staff effectively in order to meet the needs of all pupils and to deliver all aspects of the curriculum.

Performance management arrangements identify and meet staff development needs in line with school improvement priorities. Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and arrangements for this are well managed.

In view of the effective use the school makes of its funding, the high level of care, support and guidance and the good progress made by nearly all pupils, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the Foundation Phase, 92% of the pupils achieved outcome 5 (the expected outcome) in relation to the development of their language, mathematical and personal skills (the Foundation Phase indicator). This is significantly higher than the average for the family of similar schools. The proportion of pupils who achieve above the expected level (outcome 6) in all three areas is also above the family of schools average.

In the Foundation Phase in relation to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, its performance in 2012 placed it in the top 25% for the development of the pupils' personal skills, in the top 50% for the development of their language skills, but in the lower 50% for the development of their mathematical skills.

In 2012, the key stage 2 cohort was small, which means that assessment results have to be treated with care.

The percentage of pupils who attained level 4 (the expected level) or above in English or Welsh, mathematics and science (the core subject indicator) was just below the family average in 2012 but had been above the family average in the previous four years. The school is placed near the bottom of the family for writing in Welsh and English and is below all comparators. There has been a two-year dip in mathematics performance at the end of key stage 2, and in 2012 it was below the family's average. In the previous three years, performance had been above the family average.

In 2012, in relation to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 placed the school in the top 25% for Welsh and science, in the lower 50% for English and in the lowest 25% for mathematics and the core subject indicator at key stage 2. During the last three years the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination has varied from the bottom 25% to the highest 25%.

The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5) in 2012 was above the family average and the school is in the top 25% of schools in the family in relation to performance levels in English, mathematics and science, and in the top 50% in Welsh. In the previous three years the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in Welsh, English, mathematics and science was above the family average.

In relation to the relative performance of boys and girls there was very little difference in those achieving the expected outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase. However, girls outperform the boys in achieving outcome 6 in literacy and mathematical development. In key stage 2, there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and twenty-two learners in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Overall, the responses are similar to the benchmarks for positive responses for all primary schools in Wales.

All or almost all pupils:

- feel safe in school;
- know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy;
- believe that the school provides lots of chances for them to get regular exercise;
- feel that they are doing well at school;
- believe that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress;
- know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard;
- say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work;
- believe that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school; and
- indicate that other children behave well and that they can get on with their work.

However, a few pupils believe that the school does not deal well with any bullying and that homework does not help them to learn and make progress. A minority do not believe that children behave well at playtime and lunchtime

Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty-nine parents/carers completed the questionnaires. Overall, the responses from parents are similar to the benchmarks for positive responses for all primary schools inspected in Wales.

All or almost all parents/carers say that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their child likes school;
- the school helped their child settle well when they started at the school;
- their child is making good progress;
- pupils behave well;
- the teaching is good;
- staff expect their children to work hard and to do their best;
- homework given builds well on what their children learn at school;
- staff treat each child with respect;
- their child is safe in school;
- their child is given appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs;

- they are well informed about their child's progress;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem;
- the school helps their child to be more mature and to take on responsibility;
- their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school;
- there is a good range of activities including trips or visits; and
- the school is well run.

A few believe that their child is not encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise, and a minority do not understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Aled Davies	Reporting Inspector
Ann Jones	Team Inspector
Terwyn Tomos	Team Inspector
Glenda Jones	Lay Inspector
Steffan Griffiths	Peer Inspector
Iwan Ellis	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.