



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

**Gowerton Primary School
Mount Street
Gowerton
Swansea
SA4 3EL**

Date of inspection: February 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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Context

Gowerton Primary School is in the large village of Gowerton, just outside Swansea. The school opened in September 2010, following the amalgamation of the separate Tregwyr Infants and Junior Schools. However, the new school is on a split site as it continues to use the existing infant and junior school buildings. The majority of pupils come from the village and the surrounding area, which the school describes as neither prosperous nor disadvantaged.

The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. Currently, there are 346 pupils on roll, which includes 52 nursery age pupils attending on a part-time basis. The school caters for the full range of abilities. There are 14 classes, two of which are for nursery pupils.

Nearly all pupils speak English at home. Eight per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and just over 3% speak English as an additional language. Around 12% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average of 19%. Twenty-three per cent of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register, of which five pupils have statements of special educational need and one has a note in lieu.

Both Tregwyr Infants and Tregwyr Junior Schools were last inspected in June 2007. The current headteacher was appointed when the two schools amalgamated in September 2010.

The individual school budget per pupil for Gowerton Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,203 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Swansea is £11,089 and the minimum is £2,560. Gowerton Primary School is 39th out of the 86 primary schools in Swansea 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:

- by Year 6 most pupils achieve good standards in their key skills;
- nearly all pupils have good independent learning skills and they enjoy their work;
- teaching is good overall;
- very good quality relationships between staff and pupils support teaching and learning well; and
- in a short space of time, the school has created a bright and attractive learning environment.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision and has drawn staff together very successfully to create an excellent whole school culture of continuous improvement;
- better use of data analysis has led to an improved understanding of pupil performance;
- the governing body is well informed and acts effectively as a 'critical' friend; and
- the school works well in partnership with parents, the local community and the local authority.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the school needs to:

- R1 improve pupils' standards of independent writing in English and across the curriculum in the Foundation Phase and lower key stage 2;
- R2 further develop all pupils' confidence to use Welsh at an appropriate level across the school;
- R3 ensure that lessons are consistently well differentiated to meet the needs of more able pupils;
- R4 develop a consistent approach to setting pupil targets for improvement with suitable levels of challenge; and
- R5 ensure that the school development plan has clearly identified priorities and success criteria which focus specifically on pupil outcomes.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how the school is going to 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?

Good

Standards: Good

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils develop good speaking and listening skills, through a range of appropriate activities such as role-play and hot seating. In key stage 2, most pupils successfully continue to build their confidence to speak clearly. They express their ideas and opinions, using a growing range of vocabulary, over a wide range of tasks. Most listen carefully and concentrate well during class activities for extended periods.

Many pupils in the Foundation Phase enjoy books. They successfully develop their skills to build and decode unfamiliar words using phonic strategies. More able pupils in Year 2 read with increasing fluency and expression and they are developing simple research skills. Many pupils in key stage 2 read a range of books with enjoyment, understanding and fluency. They competently use a range of sources to locate information, but they do not consistently present their research in their own words. More able pupils in Year 6 have good higher order reading skills and can skim and scan a text efficiently to quickly locate specific information.

The quality of pupils' writing in the Foundation Phase and lower key stage 2 is very variable. Many pupils do not have a secure grasp of basic punctuation and spelling and their work is often untidy and poorly presented. More able pupils achieve good standards in writing in English, but all pupils' ability to write independently and at length across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Many older pupils in key stage 2 achieve good standards in their writing and they write confidently for a wide range of different purposes. Most are able to plan and redraft their work and use peer and self-assessment successfully to identify areas for improvement. Pupils apply their writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum. In history, for example, they write interesting and well-structured diary extracts about their day in a Victorian school, demonstrating good presentation skills.

Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in relation to their abilities, especially in reading.

The majority of pupils speak, read and write Welsh at an appropriate level in formal classroom situations in the Foundation Phase and in many classes in key stage 2. Pupils generally lack confidence to use Welsh orally in more informal settings, in and around the school.

Pupils enter the school with good levels of skills in language, numeracy and personal and social development. Baseline scores are consistently above the average for the local authority. Over the last few years, end of key stage 1 results have been very variable when compared to those of similar schools. Compared to the performance levels of other schools in the same family, performance in English and mathematics has been around the average for the last four years, while science results have been consistently above the average. The results of more able pupils have shown an overall decline since 2007.

Key stage 2 results have also been very variable. Since 2007, results in English and mathematics have frequently been in either the lower 50% or bottom 25% when compared to those of similar schools. Over the same period, results in English and mathematics have generally been below the average for other schools in the same family, with science results around the average. The performance of more able pupils in English and mathematics has remained around the family average since 2007, but performance in science has been consistently below.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils are aware of the need to eat healthily and to take regular exercise. Pupils in key stage 2, in particular, enjoy participating in the extensive range of lunchtime and after-school clubs that the school provides.

Attendance rates are below the average when compared to those of similar schools. However, the school is taking positive steps to improve attendance and these measures are beginning to impact positively on overall attendance figures.

Most pupils feel safe in school and the school deals quickly with any instances of bullying or unacceptable behaviour. Nearly all pupils are polite and courteous and they are developing good skills of co-operation. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and demonstrate good independent learning skills. The school council is beginning to develop its role and has been instrumental in the provision of additional play equipment for both school yards and in developing the new school's vision.

There are close links with the local community and pupils in the school choir often perform at joint choral events in St John's Church, to celebrate special times of the year.

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

Most teachers collaborate well to plan a good variety of stimulating learning experiences across the curriculum. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, run by staff, parents and volunteers, also enrich pupils' learning. Teachers' planning is very thorough and clearly identifies the development of key skills. The provision to develop pupils' skills is further enhanced by the well planned 'key skills investigators programme' in Years 5 and 6. Provision for reading is well organised throughout the school. However, the overuse of worksheets constrains the development of pupils' independent writing skills in the Foundation Phase and lower key stage 2.

Provision for Welsh is good. All teachers promote the use of incidental Welsh very well. Welsh is used widely on wall displays and the Welsh dimension is strong in many curriculum areas, particularly in art.

There is good provision for pupils to learn about sustainability. Eco committee members work hard to ensure that the school re-cycles waste and conserves energy. Pupils are also developing a good awareness of global citizenship through links with other primary schools in Africa.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to frame questions, which develop effectively pupils' understanding. Lessons have clear learning objectives and a range of interesting tasks, which engage and motivate nearly all pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and all staff provide good support to ensure nearly all pupils make progress. Plenary sessions are used effectively to review learning. However, work is not differentiated consistently to meet the needs of more able pupils. The weekly 'key skills investigators' session for pupils in Year 5 and 6 is successful in equipping pupils with a wide range of skills, which they apply well in a range of contexts.

In the majority of classes, teachers provide good oral and written feedback and involve pupils in judging their own progress. However, targets for improvement do not match individual pupils' needs sufficiently. Reports to parents are good.

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress is good. Staff are beginning to use the results of assessments to plan lessons that are well suited to pupils' interests. Together with neighbouring schools, the school has checked the accuracy of teachers' assessments, and produced useful portfolios of work that exemplify standards in key skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development well. Good quality assemblies and a range of visits and visitors enhance effectively pupils' learning experiences. As a result, pupils show respect and consideration for each other and for adults and are tolerant of different points of view.

Good use is made of a range of specialist services, such as the educational psychologist, to support and meet the needs of identified pupils.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Individual education plans set realistic targets and outline appropriate learning strategies to achieve these. Specialist teachers and learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils in class lessons. The school keeps parents and pupils fully aware of pupils' progress and involves them appropriately in the review process. Records in individual files show that nearly all pupils make good progress relative to their ability.

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

Learning environment: Good

Although the school is spread over three sites, it uses its accommodation very effectively. Since the amalgamation, the school has invested extensively in upgrading the internal and external learning environments. As a result, pupils have access to bright and attractive work and play areas. There is a good range of resources to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Attractive and extensive displays in classrooms and school communal areas also enrich pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements.

The outside woodland area enhances successfully pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils in the Foundation Phase. The school also makes effective use of the local sports field for games activities.

The school is fully inclusive. All activities are open to pupils regardless of their background and there is an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for others.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, based on creating an inclusive community. The school motto, "Together we learn, laugh, grow and achieve", is central to the vision, which was developed through a thorough and detailed consultation process involving staff, governors, pupils and parents. The headteacher's management of staff to create a whole school culture has been excellent, and has resulted in a very successful amalgamation of the two schools. The process and procedures followed provide an excellent model for other amalgamations within the local authority.

The school has clearly defined leadership roles, with clear structures and systems to support staff. There is a team approach to leadership, and communication is effective. The weekly staff briefings on email, for example, ensure that all staff contribute to the priorities for development.

The headteacher has introduced well-defined performance management systems for teachers with targets that link well to the school's priorities. These arrangements do not yet include support staff.

The governing body understands the school well and governors carry out their roles effectively. They are well informed about the school's performance and are fully aware of the school's priorities. This means they act effectively as a 'critical friend'. An excellent feature is the direct link between individual governors and pupils in classrooms through the governor 'buddy' arrangement. This is successfully raising governors' awareness of pupils' standards through first-hand experience.

The school is working well to meet local and national priorities. It has successfully implemented the Foundation Phase and literacy and numeracy are priorities for improvement, as are assessment for learning and thinking skills.

Improving quality: Good

The school is developing a culture of continuous self-improvement. It is proactive in securing and taking account of the views of parents, governors and pupils. Following the amalgamation, teachers increasingly use performance data effectively to inform priorities for school improvement.

Teachers with responsibility for curriculum areas monitor and evaluate their subjects well and generate practical action plans. Many focus strongly on pupil performance. However, plans do not yet fully inform the current school development plan.

Although the current school development lacks a sharp focus, there have been measurable improvements in provision and standards since the amalgamation. Of particular note are the improvements in teachers' planning and the standards of pupils' skills across the curriculum by the time they reach Year 6. The school has also successfully implemented the Foundation Phase and ensured good links between Years 2 and 3 classes.

All staff benefit from appropriate development opportunities and most teachers have visited other classes and schools to share good practice. As a result, this helps to develop aspects of the curriculum and improve provision.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents and the community are effective. Parents are well informed about school activities through regular newsletters, texts and the internet. The school has an open-door policy and parents have regular contact with staff. A good number of organisations within the community, such as places of worship and local businesses, have beneficial links with the school.

There are good arrangements to ensure smooth induction to the school from playgroups and from the Foundation Phase to key stage 2. There are effective partnerships with local primary and secondary schools, which ensure smooth transition to secondary education.

The school has a close partnership with the local authority and this has supported the amalgamation process well.

Resource management: Good

The school manages the inconvenience of a split site well. Staff are deployed effectively and work together well to make best use of their expertise. Teachers make efficient use of the time allocated for planning, preparation and assessment.

The budget is managed carefully, with spending plans linked appropriately to the school's priorities. In view of the good progress made in amalgamating the two former schools and the good standards achieved by most pupils by the end of Year 6, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Results at the end of key stage 1 over the last few years from Tregwyr Infants School have been very variable. Since 2007, performance at level 2 (the expected level for pupils of seven years of age) has varied greatly in English and mathematics between the top 25% and lower 50% when compared to that of similar schools (those with similar percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals). In 2011, results were in the upper 50% of those for similar schools for mathematics and science and the lower 50% for English. When results are compared to those of other schools in the same family, performance at level 2 in English and mathematics has been around the average for the last four years, except for lower than average results in reading. Results in science over the same period have been consistently above family averages, despite a dip in 2011. Performance in all three subjects was above local authority and all-Wales averages in 2011.

In key stage 2, results at level 4 (the expected level for pupils of 11 years of age) from Tregwyr Junior School have also been very variable when compared to those of similar schools. In 2011, results in English and mathematics were in the upper 50% of those for similar schools, with results in science in the lower 50%. Performance in all three subjects was above local authority and all-Wales averages. When compared to those of schools in the same family, results in English have been below average since 2008, but showed an improvement in 2011. Results in mathematics were around the family average in 2008, but then declined for two years before an upturn in 2011. In science, overall results have fallen since 2008, but remain at around the family average, with the exception of results for 2010.

In key stage 1, the results of more able pupils at level 3 in English and science have shown an overall decline since 2007 from above to below family averages. Performance in mathematics has also declined from above to now around the family average. In key stage 2, more able pupils' performance at the higher level 5 for English and mathematics has been relatively static since 2007, at around the average for the family. Overall performance in science has declined considerably over the same period but showed a slight recovery in 2011 to just below family averages.

Girls outperform boys in all three subjects at level 2, particularly in English. In key stage 2, girls do better than boys at level 4 in English, particularly in reading, with a difference greater than the family average. At the higher level 5, more able boys outperform girls in mathematics and science by more than the family average. The school's results at the end of both key stages show that there is no significant difference in outcomes for pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses from the pupil questionnaires (101 responses)

Nearly all pupils think school staff help them to learn and make progress and that they know whom to ask if they find their work hard. Nearly all also say that they know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. Most pupils think that they are doing well at school, and that the school teaches them to be healthy and provides plenty of opportunities for regular exercise. These responses are in line with the views of pupils in other primary schools across Wales.

Most pupils say that they feel safe in school and many think that the school deals well with any bullying. Many pupils find their homework helpful, say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work, and think other pupils behave well in class and at break and lunchtimes. In relation to these questions, the proportion of positive responses is below the average from pupils in other primary schools in Wales.

Responses from the parent questionnaires (131 responses)

Nearly all parents indicate that overall, they are satisfied with the school, say that their child likes school, and agree that their child was helped to settle in to school life. Nearly all parents think their child is making good progress at school, think that pupils behave well, and agree that teaching is good. All parents feel that staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Nearly all parents think that homework is useful, say that staff treat pupils fairly and with respect and agree that their child is encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise. All parents say that their child is safe in school. Most parents think that their child receives appropriate additional support to meet any particular needs, say that they are well informed about their child's progress, and feel that pupils are well prepared for the move to secondary school. Nearly all parents agree that the school is well run, say that they are comfortable to approach staff with questions, suggestions or problems, agree that the school helps their child to mature and take on more responsibility, and say that there are a good range of activities including trips and visits. Many agree that they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints. These responses are in line with the responses of parents in primary schools across Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Rhona Edwards	Reporting Inspector
Terwyn Tomas	Team Inspector
Chris Dolby	Team Inspector
Julie Price	Lay Inspector
David Thomas	Peer Inspector
Susie Ralph	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.

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. FYear 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

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.