



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 Griffith Jones
Station Road
St Clears
Carmarthenshire
SA33 4BT**

Date of inspection: June 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 Griffith Jones is situated in the small town of St Clears in Carmarthenshire. It provides education for pupils in the town in addition to a small number who come from nearby areas. During the inspection, there were 266 pupils on roll, including 35 nursery-age children who attend on a part-time basis.

The school includes two language streams, with eight classes in which pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh, and three classes in which pupils are taught through the medium of English.

According to the Welsh Government's latest figures, approximately 42% of pupils speak Welsh at home. The school notes that 31% of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. A very few pupils are from a mixed ethnic background. Pupils represent the full range of ability. The school describes the area the pupils come from as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

According to the school, approximately 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is significantly lower than the county and all-Wales figures. This figure is higher than it has been in recent years. Nearly 26% of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register, which is higher than the national average.

The school was last inspected in May 2007. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Griffith Jones in 2012-2013 is £3,366. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £25,997 and the minimum is £2,878. Ysgol Gynradd Griffith Jones is in 85th place out of the 108 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in terms of the 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:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve well during their time at the school;
- nearly all pupils behave well and have a positive attitude towards learning;
- there are stimulating learning experiences of high quality, and teaching staff, with the support of ancillary staff, support learning effectively;
- the school provides a happy and caring learning environment; and
- a range of partnerships contribute positively towards pupils' outcomes.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision for the school which focuses appropriately on pupils' wellbeing and improving standards;
- all members of staff understand their roles clearly, support each other and work effectively as a team;
- the school has a good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses;
- all members of staff participate effectively in activities which improve pupils' outcomes; and
- the governing body are very supportive of the school and operate appropriately as critical friends.

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards of writing in Welsh second language

R2 Improve boys' achievements in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2

R3 Develop performance management procedures for ancillary staff

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

In lessons, most pupils recall previous learning successfully and use this information effectively to acquire new information and skills. Most pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at school.

In the English stream, most pupils read in English to a level that is appropriate for their age and ability. They make full use of their extended writing skills across the curriculum. The presentation of most pupils' work is neat and organised. Most pupils' work shows good standards in terms of the accuracy of language in English, along with the ability to organise their work into paragraphs and use punctuation. There is interesting creative work in English, which includes the use of appropriate style and vocabulary. Pupils' oracy skills are developing well, and the majority have a wide vocabulary and the ability to discuss a variety of texts effectively at an appropriate level.

In Welsh second language, most pupils read at a level that is appropriate for their age and ability. Many pupils in key stage 2 can converse and answer simple questions in Welsh in other subjects. However, a minority continue to make mistakes when spelling and writing in Welsh second language. They use too many worksheets, and this affects the progress that they make in their ability to write in their own words.

In the Welsh stream, most pupils in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 make good progress in their reading skills in both languages, and they are able to use these skills appropriately in other subjects. Pupils' oracy skills are developing successfully in both languages, and most are able to discuss their work maturely with other pupils and adults. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase write confidently, while most pupils in key stage 2 are able to write at length and maturely in a range of forms in both languages.

From a very young age, pupils make extremely effective use of information and communication technology such as recording equipment, portable computers and a number of programmes to support their learning. Most pupils' numeracy and thinking skills are developing successfully.

Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. More able and talented pupils also make good progress.

In 2012, pupils' achievements in the Foundation Phase indicator were higher than the average of the family of similar schools and the Wales average. When comparing the school's results with those of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performs in the top 25% for Welsh language skills, the top 50% for mathematical skills and the 50% for English language skills and personal skills. The proportion of pupils who achieved higher

than the expected outcome was lower than the average for the family and Wales, except in Welsh.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level or above in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined in 2012 was significantly higher than the average for the family of similar schools and the average for Wales. In general, there has been an upward trend over the last four years. Over a period of time, achievements were lower than those of the family, but have been higher during the last two years. When comparing the school's results with the results of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performed in the top 25% in Welsh, the top 50% in English and mathematics, and in the lower 50% in science. In previous years, trends have varied between the bottom 25% and the top 25%.

In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved higher than the expected level was higher than the family average in both languages, lower in mathematics and higher in science. However, prior to that, percentages were lower than the family average, in general.

Over a period of four years, girls' achievements have been significantly better than the achievements of boys.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Nearly all pupils participate conscientiously in lessons and are enthusiastic about learning.

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and know whom to approach for advice. The vast majority of pupils are aware of the importance of keeping healthy and take part in regular activities provided by the school to do exercise. Many take advantage of opportunities to take part in various after-school clubs, which contribute well towards their wellbeing and raise their confidence.

Pupils' attendance percentage is close to the family and national averages, although it does not compare as favourably with attendance at similar schools in terms of the level of entitlement to free school meals. Pupils' punctuality is good.

Older pupils respond positively to responsibilities. They have mature attitudes towards their work and treat others with care and respect. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and take advantage of suitable opportunities to express their views through their contribution to the activities of the school council and the eco council.

Pupils contribute extensively to charity work by raising money and taking part in social events in the community. For example, older pupils work with the local council to update information on the town's information boards about the history of the area and local nature life. This develops their social skills and life skills effectively.

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

The school provides a varied and interesting range of learning experiences for pupils. Schemes of work are comprehensive and respond well to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Phase.

Literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, and thinking skills are given a prominent place within planning. Teachers prepare a variety of differentiated activities for pupils, and provide to satisfy and stretch more able pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics across the curriculum.

Provision for Welsh first language is strong; however, there are not enough opportunities to develop writing skills in Welsh as a second language. There are varied opportunities for pupils to learn about the history, geography and culture of Wales, along with frequent opportunities to study the local area.

The school offers a wide range of interesting experiences in sustainability and global citizenship. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible citizens and to play an active part in the local community and the global community. Provision offers valuable opportunities for pupils to collect for charity, recycle, use less energy and learn about fair trade products.

Teaching: Good

In most of the effective sessions, there is detailed preparation, clear organisation, lively presentations, probing questions and regular opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in groups. The warm working relationship between teachers and pupils promotes purposeful interaction, which stimulates learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use ancillary staff productively within classrooms and in a range of other activities across the school.

In the very few sessions where teaching is less effective, teachers do not ensure that pupils concentrate on their tasks and there is a lack of challenging and stimulating tasks.

The school has appropriate arrangements for assessing, monitoring and recording pupils' progress. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers offer detailed feedback both orally and in writing, which directs pupils towards identifying their next steps. There are sound assessments for learning strategies which enable pupils to reflect on their own progress, assess the work of their peers and set targets for improvement. Most pupils participate in setting and monitoring their own targets and know what to do to improve their own learning.

Reports to parents provide them with full information about their children's progress and meet the statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a very happy one in which pupils feel safe. Pupils' health and fitness are promoted well by a variety of sports clubs and a daily fruit shop. The school is an important part of the community and provides good opportunities for pupils to support local cultural and social events.

The school makes good use of the support of external specialist services, including education welfare, medical and emergency services, and pupils benefit from these experiences. The school has appropriate systems to continue to promote good attendance.

Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well by planning a wide range of experiences.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is comprehensive. Pupils' needs are identified early by teachers and good quality individual education plans are provided for them. These plans are reviewed regularly in consultation with pupils, parents and appropriate specialist agencies.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a very inclusive and friendly ethos and the community is close-knit and welcoming. Pupils are encouraged to understand and respect others from various backgrounds and policies, plans and procedures are in place to ensure equal opportunities for all and to promote equality and social diversity.

Purposeful use is made of the school's building and grounds for play and learning.

Classrooms are colourful with suitable resources for the purposes of the curriculum. There are polished displays of a high standard across the school which stimulate learning. They show good examples of pupils' work and successes. The grounds and accommodation are clean and well maintained.

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

The headteacher's vision for the school is clear and is shared effectively with pupils, staff and the governing body. They all work together successfully to ensure that the school raises and maintains standards.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team offer sound and effective leadership and management. They have high expectations for themselves and the remainder of the school's staff, and they take full ownership of their individual responsibilities.

The senior management team analyses performance data rigorously and uses its findings effectively to monitor performance and support the school's self-evaluation process.

There is a tight structure of regular meetings and a variety of sound internal communication teams and systems, which ensure that all aspects of the school's work are discussed thoroughly. As a result, teachers are given good opportunities to contribute to various aspects of management and leadership across the school.

Governors are well informed about how the school is performing in comparison with similar schools, and they challenge the school's leadership appropriately.

The school pays good attention to local and national priorities. It has operated successfully to improve standards of literacy, and the principles of the Foundation Phase are implemented effectively. Assessment for learning is an integral part of learning.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluations processes and the high expectations amongst teachers and governors have a positive influence on promoting higher standards across the school.

The process of monitoring the curriculum and skills contributes positively to the process of raising standards. There is an appropriate emphasis on monitoring standards in addition to provision, and issues to be developed are considered carefully by the headteacher and the governing body.

The school's self-evaluation report is clear and analytical. A wide range of evidence is used to support views, including performance data, the views of parents and pupils, monitoring work, lesson observation and the views of the local authority's improvement officers.

The development plan is an operational document and priorities match the issues identified in the self-evaluation. The development plan sets measurable targets and a specific budget for ensuring improvement.

The school is becoming a strong learning community. There is a wide range of good opportunities for staff to improve their skills and their professional knowledge, and teachers visit other schools to observe, lead and share good practice. Senior staff develop their leadership skills appropriately and this leads to improving quality. In addition, the family of schools' recent network has assisted in developing effective literacy strategies.

Partnership working: Good

The school works very effectively with a range of partnerships. There is strong co-operation with parents at the school to increase school resources, through the parent teacher association. There is effective contact between the school and the parents of those pupils who are about to start school.

The school has a very close link with the community. Pupils benefit greatly from visits away from the school's site as well as welcoming visitors to talk about their work.

There are appropriate partnerships with a number of the local authority's agencies, which have a positive effect on developing pupils' wellbeing and attainment. Relationships with care services, police, the fire service and the Education and Business Partnership are effective.

The school works closely with local primary schools, and activities with the local secondary schools ensure successful transition for pupils, which prepares them appropriately for the next stage in their education. There are effective arrangements for standardising and moderating teachers' assessments and to ensure smooth transfer.

Resource management: Good

The school has enough teaching staff, and ancillary staff support teaching and learning successfully across the school. The school responds appropriately to statutory requirements for performance management; however, ancillary staff are not part of this process. Managers ensure that staff receive suitable training meets the needs of individuals and the school's priorities in full.

The school meets the requirements relating to teachers' workload. Teachers use their non-contact time effectively to plan, prepare and assess pupils' work and observe good practice.

The school's finance sub-committee meets regularly and the senior management team and governors earmark enough funds to address the school's priorities. Improvements both inside and outside the building have created a stimulating and attractive learning environment, which has had a significant effect on pupils' attitudes towards their school.

The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2012, pupils' achievements in the Foundation Phase indicator were higher than the average for the family of similar schools and Wales. When comparing the school's results with those of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performed in the top 25% for Welsh language skills, the top 50% in terms of mathematical skills and the lower 50% for English language skills and personal skills. The proportion of pupils who achieved higher than the expected outcome was lower than the family and Wales averages, except in Welsh.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level or above in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined in 2012 was significantly higher than the average for the family of similar schools and the average for Wales. In general, there has been an upward trend over the last four years. Over a period of time, achievements were lower than those of the family, but have been higher during the last two years. When comparing the school's results with the results of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school performed in the top 25% in Welsh, the top 50% in English and mathematics, and in the lower 50% in science. In previous years, trends have varied between the bottom 25% and the top 25%

In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved higher than the expected level was higher than the family average in both languages, lower in mathematics and higher in science. However, prior to that, percentages were lower than the family average, in general. The percentage of pupils who achieved higher than the expected level was higher than the family average in both languages, lower in mathematics and higher in science.

Over a period of four years, in comparison with the national percentages, girls have generally performed much better than boys.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixty parents responded to the questionnaire. The responses are very positive, considering the averages for schools across Wales.

All parents say that:

- they are satisfied with the school, in general;
- their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school; and
- their child likes the school.

Nearly all parents say that:

- their child makes good progress at school;
- teaching is good;
- the homework that is given builds well on what their child learns in school;
- staff expect their child to work hard and do his or her best;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- their child is safe at school;
- the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility; and
- their child is prepared well for moving on to the next school.

Most parents agree that:

- pupils behave well in school;
- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- the school provides regular information about their child's progress;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, making suggestions or identifying a problem;
- there is a good range of activities, including trips or visits; and
- the school is well run.

Many say that:

- they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Questionnaires were completed by 109 pupils in key stage 2. The responses are very positive and are higher than the national average for primary schools.

Nearly all pupils agree that they feel safe in school and that the school deals well with any bullying. They all know with whom to talk if they are worried or upset and whom to ask for advice. They all agree that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that there are many opportunities for them to get regular exercise. All pupils feel that the teachers help them to learn and make progress, and nearly all pupils feel that they are doing well at school. Nearly all pupils say that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. All are of the opinion that there are enough books, equipment and computers for them to do their work. Most are of the opinion that other children behave well and that they can get their work done, and that children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Hazel Hughes	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Lona Jones Campbell	Peer Inspector
Beti Wyn James	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.