



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate
For Education and Training in Wales



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Inspection under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

Llanfyllin High School

**Llanfyllin
Powys
SY22 5BJ**

Report by H M Inspectors

A Summary Report for Parents

School Number: 686 / 4001

Date of Inspection: 28 April – 2 May 2003

Llanfyllin High School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify strengths and weaknesses in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their children's schools. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. **The full report can be obtained from the school.**

The inspection of Llanfyllin High School took place between 28 April - 2 May 2003. It was undertaken by Estyn, with a team of 8 HMI and 10 independent inspectors, led by Mr Steffan James HMI.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the efficiency with which financial resources were used and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Llanfyllin High School
Type of school	Maintained by the LEA
Age range of pupils	11-18
School address	Llanfyllin Powys
Post code	SY22 5BJ
Phone number	01492 640516/640649

Headteacher	Dr David Leighton
Date of appointment	1988
Chair of governors	Mrs Jean Lewis
Lead inspector	Steffan James HMI
Dates of inspection	28 April 2003 – 2 May 2003

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Context

The school and its priorities

Llanfyllin High School is an 11-18, naturally bilingual, mixed comprehensive school, maintained by Powys Local Education Authority (LEA). It is situated in the small country town of Llanfyllin, and has a prominent place in the community through the multiple use of the campus by a sports centre, a primary school and various local authority agencies. There are 929 pupils on the school roll, including 145 sixth form students. Pupil numbers have increased consistently in recent years.

Half of the pupils come from the rural area surrounding Llanfyllin, whilst the others come from Llanfyllin itself and other small towns. An increasing number of pupils come to the school from across the English border. Pupils from more than 20 primary schools feed the school although there are considerably less than this number in the natural catchment. According to the school, the catchment area is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged, and the intake represents the full range of ability. Compared with other secondary schools nationally, it contains a smaller proportion of pupils of very low or below average ability, and an average proportion of pupils of very high or above average ability. Just over 4% of pupils are registered as entitled to receive free school meals. This is lower than county, and considerably lower than national averages for secondary schools. At the same time, average incomes in the area surrounding the school are lower than the averages for Powys and Wales.

Twenty per cent of the pupils come from homes where Welsh is the main language, and about 22% speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. Just over 1% of pupils are from ethnic minorities. Thirteen per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is lower than the percentage nationally. Just under 3% of pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN), a percentage that is slightly above the national figure for mainstream schools.

The school has nine broad aims which are displayed prominently in the school prospectus. The school development plan (SDP) for the next two years has 17 specific priorities. Broadly speaking, these cover school management, self evaluation, inclusion, celebration of pupils' achievement, professional development for teachers, the continual improvement of teaching and learning, monitoring and improving pupils' progress, the school day, links with primary schools, the school building programme and extension of the use of ICT.

The school's main quantitative targets for 2002-2003 are as follows:

Key stage 3 tests	% gaining level 5+*
Welsh	78%
English	73%
Mathematics	80%
Science	69%

Core Subject Indicator (CSI)**	67%
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Key stage 4	% gaining
CSI**	56%
5 GCSE subjects, grades A*-C	73%
5 GCSE subjects, grades A*-G	93%

*Level 5 is the level that most pupils are expected to achieve in National Curriculum assessment in key stage 3.

** The core subject indicator (CSI) in key stage 3 indicates the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 in each of the core subjects, i.e. either Welsh (first language) or English, together with mathematics and science. In key stage 4 it indicates the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* - C in each of the core subjects.

The last inspection of the school was held in the spring term of 1997.

Main Findings

This is a good school. It has a strong ethos of valuing individuals and of ensuring care, support and respect for all. It is a pleasant, civilised community in which pupils of all ages, abilities and backgrounds feel safe, happy and supported, and behave responsibly and courteously. An outstanding feature is the care and concern for the well-being and morale of all staff and pupils. Pupils demonstrate a high level of commitment and application to their work and achieve good results in public examinations.

Educational standards achieved by the pupils

Standards of achievement in subjects

Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
Welsh	Good	Good	Very good
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Science	Good	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Information technology & computing	Good	Satisfactory	Very Good
Modern foreign languages	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
History	Satisfactory	Very good	Good
Geography	Very good	Very good	Very good
Religious education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	*
Religious studies	n/a	Good	n/a
Art	Good	Very good	Very good
Music	Good	Good	Good
Physical Education	Good	Satisfactory	n/a
Sports studies	n/a	n/a	Very good
Personal and social education (PSE)	No judgement**	Satisfactory**	*
Drama	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Business studies	n/a	Good	Good
Electronics	n/a	Good	Good
Catering	n/a	Good	n/a
Home economics	n/a-	n/a	Good
Media studies	n/a	n/a	Very good
Psychology	n/a	n/a	Good

* The school does not provide lessons in religious education or PSE in the sixth form.

** Inspectors were unable to see classes in PSE in key stage 3. Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory in both key stage 3 and key stage 4. Further information can be found in sections 2, 5.3, 7. (PSE) and 8.2.

- Overall, standards of achievement were satisfactory or better in 95% of the classes inspected. Standards were good in 50% and very good in a further 14% of classes. This meets the targets, set by the National Assembly for Wales, that standards should be at least satisfactory in 95% of classes and good or better in 50%.
- In the sixth form, standards were good in 69% of lessons, very good in a further 24%, and satisfactory in the rest.
- In most subjects, there are no obvious differences in achievement between pupils in different ability groups. Pupils with SEN make good progress. In a few subjects, pupils' progress is relatively slow in key stage 3. On the whole, girls achieve better standards than boys and are in the majority in higher sets.

Public examinations and tests

- In key stage 3 National Curriculum (NC) tests in the last two years, pupils' performance has been well above the Wales average and close to the local education authority (LEA) average. However, compared with schools throughout Wales with a similar intake (that is, in terms of the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals [see section1]), the school has been in the lower half.
- At GCSE, the school's results in recent years have been very good, and consistently above Wales and LEA averages for all main indicators. Compared with similar schools in Wales, the school performs well. The difference in performance between boys and girls in 2002 was much wider than in Wales as a whole.
- In A level examinations, results are consistently good. In the last two years, they have been significantly better than the Wales and LEA averages.

Standards in key skills

Skill	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
Listening	Very good	Very good	Very good
Speaking	Good	Good	Very good
Reading	Good	Good	Very good
Writing	Good	Good	Very good
Numeracy	Good	Good	Very good
ICT	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

Ethos of the school

- Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Welsh dimension is developed effectively in many subjects, but is not evident enough in the general life of the school.

- Many year-group assemblies, together with some tutor group periods and certain subject lessons, effectively foster pupils' spiritual development. However, despite some improvement since the last inspection, provision for collective worship still does not meet statutory requirements, and remains a key issue after this inspection.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall, and shows a significant improvement since the last inspection in 1997. Punctuality at the start of the school day and individual lessons is very good.
- While there has been a significant improvement in the attendance of sixth form students since the last inspection, it has been mostly below 90% in the past year, and therefore unsatisfactory overall.

Quality of education

- The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 92% of the classes inspected. It was good in 50% of classes and very good in a further 17%. This meets the target set by the National Assembly for Wales that teaching should be at least good in 50% of classes. It does not meet the target that teaching should be at least satisfactory in 95% of classes. Teaching was best in the sixth form, where it was good or very good in 90% of classes.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' attainment and achievement is good. The school has successfully addressed the shortcomings that were identified in the previous inspection.
- Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced. On the whole, subjects have enough time in key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form, but in key stage 4 there is not enough time for physical education or religious education. Pupils studying Welsh as a first language do not receive several statutory aspects of the health education programme in key stage 3 and in year 10.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school has appropriately introduced several flexible curriculum initiatives to motivate a small number of disaffected pupils in key stage 4.
- The quality of support and guidance offered to all pupils, including those with SEN, is good. Pupils with SEN make good progress.
- Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions is good overall. Subject links with primary schools have been valuable in some subjects, but are not well developed in others. Partnership with industry is satisfactory, but there is scope to develop it further.

Management and efficiency

- The headteacher provides inspirational and charismatic leadership. He is ably and energetically supported by the other members of the senior management team, who operate effectively as a well-balanced and cohesive group. Middle managers generally organise their teams or departments efficiently.
- Self-evaluation and planning for improvement are good at senior management level and satisfactory at middle management level.
- The school is well managed and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It provides good value for money. However, at present the head and deputy spend too much time teaching, in order to cover the unexpected temporary loss of some members of staff. This situation is a considerable burden for both and needs to be addressed urgently.
- The quality of staffing is good. Support staff and classroom assistants make an effective contribution.
- The overall quality of accommodation is satisfactory. It is very good in a few subjects, and generally good in most, but is unsatisfactory for indoor work in physical education.
- The quality and quantity of learning resources, including computers, are good. However, there are not enough computers within teaching areas for pupils to use during the course of lessons, and many departments have difficulties in readily accessing specialist computer rooms.

Key issues from the previous inspection

- The school has made good progress in five of the seven key issues identified in the last inspection, and satisfactory progress in key issue 3 (maintaining and improving standards). It has made only limited progress in key issue 6 (religious education in the sixth form and collective worship), which remains a key issue after this inspection.

Key issues for action

The school should:

1. further increase the amount of good or very good teaching in order to raise standards, especially in those subjects where they are currently satisfactory;
2. improve the quality and provision throughout the school in PSE, religious education and collective worship, meeting statutory requirements where necessary;
3. increase the use of incidental Welsh in the school in order to support pupils' bilingual development;
4. reduce pressure on the senior management team's time and commitments by resolving current staffing difficulties;
5. improve accommodation for indoor work in physical education;
6. address health and safety issues identified in the report; and
7. take account of the recommendations in the sixth form report:
 - i. continue to monitor attendance rigorously through the consistent use of the current procedures;
 - ii. increase the level of support for students with learning or personal difficulties;
 - iii. continue to improve the breadth and balance of students' experiences, especially through development of the personal and social education programme;
 - iv. develop strategies in all departments to address the relative under-performance of boys; and
 - v. meet statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form.

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 working days (or 45 working days where a translation is necessary) of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the issues. The action plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

The inspection team wish to thank the governors, staff and pupils of Llanfyllin High School for their co-operation during the inspection.