

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ysgol Gynradd Cross Hands
Carmarthen Road
Cross Hands
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 6SU**

School Number: 6692008

Date of Inspection: 13/10/08

by

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Ysgol Gynradd Cross Hands was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings 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 information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Ysgol Gynradd Cross Hands. School took place between 13/10/08 and 15/10/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by David Martin Cray undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a standard inspection.

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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 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	R	Y1	Y2	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 National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 This school is located in the centre of the village of Cross Hands, near Llanelli. It is a former coal mining area, but as a result of the decline in that industry, it has for many years had to adapt itself to new challenges. The area is not considered to be particularly prosperous. The school is maintained by Carmarthenshire Local Education Authority and pupils come from the village itself and the surrounding areas. The children's attainment levels vary considerably when they are first admitted to school.
- 2 There are currently 131 pupils between 3 and 11 years of age on the school register and they are admitted on a part-time basis for two terms following their third birthday, prior to full-time attendance. Pupil numbers have increased since the last inspection and they continue to grow.
- 3 Sixteen pupils (12%) are designated by the school as having additional learning needs. There are currently no statemented pupils.
- 4 Twenty per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals - a figure that is higher than county (15.2%) and national (17.5%) averages.
- 5 Slightly fewer than a quarter of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken as a first language and the school follows the National Curriculum in Wales Welsh first language programme of study. English is formally introduced at the beginning of Key Stage 2.
- 6 Pupils are taught by the headteacher, five full-time and two part-time teachers.
- 7 The headteacher was appointed to her post in September 2005 and the school was last inspected in November 2002.

The school's priorities and targets

- 8 The school's priorities and targets for 2008 – 2009 include addressing the following aspects:
 - Raising writing standards in Welsh;
 - Raising the standards achieved by girls in science;
 - Developing assessment for learning;
 - Implementing the Foundation Phase and Curriculum 2008.

Summary

- 9 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in five of the seven key questions. Higher grades were awarded for Key Questions 5 and 6.
- 10 This is a school in which a culture of excellence is clearly apparent in its provision and in its management and leadership.

Table of grades awarded

- 11 The inspection team adjudged the work of the school to be as follows:

Key question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the leadership experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
6 How well do learners and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	1
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

Standards

- 12 Pupils, including those with additional learning needs, succeed well in terms of achieving agreed learning aims. They succeed in their work, regardless of their ability, social or linguistic background. They make good progress towards achieving their potential.
- 13 In relation to similar schools in Wales in terms of the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals, the school's most recent performance results are as follows:

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Key Stage 1	4	4	1	3
Key Stage 2	3	2	4	1

Key

Performs in the upper 25% of schools

Performs in the upper 50%, but below the 25% highest performing schools

Performs in the lower 50%, but above the 25% lowest performing schools

Performs in the lowest 25% of schools

- 14 Over time, it was seen that the performance of boys is usually better than that of the girls in both key stages.

15 The standards achieved in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	71%	12%	-	-

16 These standards compare well with those published in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (2006-2007), which states that nationally, standards were generally good or better (grades 1 and 2) in 80% of lessons, and outstanding (grade 1) in 10%.

17 The overall quality of the educational provision for under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the outcomes of the Foundation Phase.

18 In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, in the subjects inspected, the standards achieved by pupils are as follows:

Subjects	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh	Grade 2	Grade 2
Science	Grade 2	Grade 2
Design and technology	Grade 1	Grade 1
Geography	Grade 2	Grade 2
Art and design	Grade 1	Grade 1
Religious education	Grade 2	Grade 2

19 The under-fives achieve appropriate levels in their communication, mathematical, and information and communications technology skills across all areas of the Foundation Phase.

20 In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils achieve good levels in their communication and mathematical skills across the curriculum. The standards they achieve in using their information and communications technology skills across the subjects are also good in both key stages.

21 Pupils' bilingual proficiency is developing well, and by the end of Key Stage 2 they use Welsh and English with increasing confidence.

22 Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are good. They display positive attitudes towards learning, interest in their work and they use their time productively in lessons.

23 The standard of pupils' behaviour is good in all classes. They show respect to their teachers and other adults and have a good understanding of the school's expectations. These responsible attitudes lay solid foundations that enable them to develop into full members of society and they make a significant contribution towards creating a pleasant learning environment.

24 Most of the pupils are happy to make an effort to solve problems independently, but in some areas, such as science in Key Stage 2 in particular, they tend to be too dependent on adult guidance. Across the

school, pupils' creative skills are developing outstandingly as they work on tasks in art and design and technology.

- 25 In the three full terms prior to the inspection, pupils' average levels of attendance were around 94%, and there is room to improve on this.

The quality of education and training

Grades for teaching

- 26 In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was adjudged to be as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
28%	56%	16%	-	-

- 27 The quality of teaching compares very well with the national picture as published in the latest Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (2006-2007), which states that the teaching was good or better (grades 1 and 2) in 80% of lessons, and outstanding (grade 1) in 14%.
- 28 The quality of the curriculum provided for pupils is an outstanding feature of the provision. The school provides equal access to a very broad and balanced curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills to particular good effect as they move through the school.
- 29 There is a very wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities, including numerous clubs, and regular visits are organised to different places that enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- 30 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively through a variety of experiences. The sessions of collective worship fulfil statutory requirements.
- 31 There are good links with the local community and the school takes part in a number of different activities that also promote pupils' understanding of the world of work.
- 32 The partnership with parents is an outstanding feature and this was reflected in the support voiced for the school at the pre-inspection meeting, and in the contents of the questionnaires, that without exception reflect very high levels of satisfaction with the provision made for their children.
- 33 Good attention is given to the Welsh dimension within subjects across the curriculum and the experiences provided ensure that pupils are aware of their heritage and of the cultural traditions of their local area and nation.
- 34 The quality of care, support and guidance offered to pupils is outstanding. The school is a close-knit and caring unit that greatly values and respects its pupils. It contributes effectively to their wellbeing and fulfils pupils' needs in a way that

enables them to make good progress according to their ability and to take full advantage of the life and work of the whole school.

- 35 The quality of leadership at the school is outstanding. The headteacher co-ordinates the work of the governing body, teachers and support staff very effectively in order to give clear strategic direction to the development of the school and to ensure that it works continuously to raise standards. Expectations are very high.
- 36 The governing body makes a very good contribution to the work of the school. Governors fulfil their responsibilities very thoroughly, operate as a critical friend and play a proactive role in helping to set the strategic direction of the school.
- 37 The culture of self-criticism that exists at the school, together with the comprehensive procedures that are in place to evaluate quality and standards are outstanding features. Curricular leaders play a key role in the self-evaluation arrangements.
- 38 Data is carefully analysed in order to compare the school's performance with that of others, although in this case there is room to pay more attention to pupil performance against national benchmarking data. Very careful consideration is given to any differences in the performance of boys and girls, and to the performance of pupils with additional learning needs.
- 39 The School Development Plan is a working document that helps to set the school's strategic direction. It is a very effective tool.
- 40 The self-evaluation report produced for the inspectors presents a very cogent view of the position of the school.
- 41 The school has made very good progress in acting on the key issues identified in the 2002 report.
- 42 The internal environment of the school is an outstanding feature. Great care is taken to celebrate pupils' work through attractive, stimulating and interesting displays in all areas.
- 43 Expenditure decisions are effectively reconciled to school priorities. The headteacher and governing body manage the budget carefully and the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

- R1 Maintain and build on the high standards already achieved by pupils.
- R2 Continue to develop pupils' independence and reduce their dependence on adults. *
- R3 Give more attention to pupil performance against national benchmarking data.

* *Already identified as a priority by the school.*

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 44 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 45 Pupils, including those with additional learning needs, succeed well in terms of achieving agreed learning aims. They succeed in their work, regardless of their ability, social or linguistic background. They make good progress towards achieving their potential.
- 46 In Key Stage 1 in 2008, according to teacher assessments, 78% of pupils attained level 2 or higher in the core subjects of Welsh, mathematics and science. In 2007 the figure was 94.1% (Wales 80%, Carmarthenshire 79%). In 2006 it was 71.4% (Wales 80.6%, Carmarthenshire 77.7%), and in 2005 it was 58.3% (Wales 80.9%, Carmarthenshire 77%). The school's results for 2008 were lower than county and national averages (2007) in the three core subjects.
- 47 In Key Stage 2 in 2008, according to teacher assessments, 94% of pupils attained level 4 or higher in the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science. In 2007 the figure was 66.7% (Wales 74%; Carmarthenshire 74%). In 2006 it was 84.6% (Wales 74.2%, Carmarthenshire 74.6%), and in 2005 it was 71.4% (Wales 74.3%; Carmarthenshire 74.8%). The results for 2008 were considerably higher than county and national averages (2007) in all subjects.

48 Over time, it was seen that the performance of boys is usually better than that of the girls in both key stages.

49 In relation to similar schools in Wales in terms of the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals, the school's most recent performance results are as follows:

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Key Stage 1	4	4	1	3
Key Stage 2	3	2	4	1

Key

Performs in the upper 25% of schools

Performs in the upper 50%, but below the 25% highest performing schools

Performs in the lower 50%, but above the 25% lowest performing schools

Performs in the lowest 25% of schools

50 The standards achieved in the lessons inspected are as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	71%	12%	-	-

51 These standards compare well with those published in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (2006-2007), which states that nationally, standards were generally good or better (grades 1 and 2) in 80% of lessons, and outstanding (grade 1) in 10%.

52 The overall quality of the educational provision for under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the outcomes of the Foundation Phase.

53 In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, in the subjects inspected, the standards achieved by pupils are as follows:

Subjects	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Welsh	Grade 2	Grade 2
Science	Grade 2	Grade 2
Design and technology	Grade 1	Grade 1
Geography	Grade 2	Grade 2
Art and design	Grade 1	Grade 1
Religious education	Grade 2	Grade 2

54 The under-fives achieve appropriate levels in their communication, mathematical, and information and communications technology skills across all areas of the Foundation Phase.

55 In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils achieve good levels in their communication and mathematical skills across the curriculum. The standards they achieve in using their information and communications technology skills across the subjects are also good in both key stages.

- 56 Pupils' bilingual proficiency is developing well, and by the end of Key Stage 2 they use Welsh and English with increasing confidence. They use English effectively in order to discover information and they record it correctly in Welsh.
- 57 Baseline data and test and other assessment results indicate that almost all pupils make significantly good progress as they move through the school. They are alert to asking questions and they learn new information and skills with confidence. They are very capable to face up to the challenge that awaits them as they move on to the next stage in their education.
- 58 Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are good. They display positive attitudes towards learning, interest in their work and they use their time productively in lessons. They work well together and take responsibility for their actions and their work.
- 59 The standard of pupils' behaviour is good in all classes. They show respect to their teachers and other adults and have a good understanding of the school's expectations. The way in which they greet and respond to visitors is a particularly good feature of their development. These responsible attitudes lay solid foundations that enable them to develop into full members of society and they make a significant contribution towards creating a pleasant learning environment.
- 60 Most of the pupils are happy to make an effort to solve problems independently, but in some areas, such as science in Key Stage 2 in particular, they tend to be too dependent on adult guidance. Across the school, the pupils' creative skills are developing outstandingly as they work on tasks in art and design and technology.
- 61 In the three full terms prior to the inspection, pupils' average levels of attendance were around 94%, and there is room to improve on this. There are few instances of unauthorised absences and pupils arrive punctually at school.
- 62 Pupils of all ages have a sense of belonging to the school community and they are very happy to shoulder additional responsibilities. Their awareness of the nature of their locality and of the world of work is generally good.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 63 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 64 In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was adjudged to be as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
28%	56%	16%	-	-

- 65 The quality of teaching compares very well with the national picture as published in the latest Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (2006-2007), which states that the teaching was good or better (grades 1 and 2) in 80% of lessons, and outstanding (grade 1) in 14%.
- 66 The teachers have a good knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and of the programmes of study for Curriculum 2008. They plan and structure their lessons thoroughly, and give good attention to the requirements of pupils' age range and abilities. The conscientious and skilled assistants make a considerable contribution to the quality of teaching.
- 67 There is a good working relationship between teachers and pupils in all classes. The importance of self-discipline is emphasised; pupils are encouraged to give of their best and praise is used effectively in order to motivate them and retain their interest. Every pupil is treated fairly and equal opportunities are provided for all.
- 68 The outstanding features to the teaching include highly challenging activities that are infectious in terms of stimulating pupils' interest and imagination. They contain very high expectations in terms of achievement and of the ability to work with others, and teachers have a very firm grasp of curricular requirements.
- 69 Teachers make effective use of a range of teaching methods and resources in order to ensure that every pupil plays an active part in his or her learning. Effective use is made of a wide range of teaching strategies, including whole class, group, paired or individual work.
- 70 Pupils' learning is monitored regularly. Teachers' purposeful intervention assists pupils to succeed and to make progress in their learning.
- 71 Teachers successfully fulfil the pupils' linguistic needs. Pupils' bilingual skills are used very effectively to extend and enhance their knowledge and understanding across all areas of the curriculum.
- 72 Where there are shortcomings, the teaching lacks sufficient pace. The objectives are unclear and there is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' ability to become independent learners and to take more responsibility for their learning.
- 73 Teachers know the pupils well and they make effective use of assessment information to plan and improve the learning.
- 74 Thorough and effective strategies have been established to assess the progress of the under-fives. Occasional and useful notes are kept of individuals' responses to the activities provided and purposeful sheets are used to record progress in the six areas of learning.

- 75 A range of appropriate methods are used to come to a view on standards in the key stages and detailed records are kept of the personal and educational development of each pupil. Purposeful use is made of tests to identify the needs of individuals. The assessment work ensures that there are individual targets for each pupil, and pupils and their parents are given an active part in the process.
- 76 Teachers mark the pupils' work on a regular basis. However, the quality is variable. In the best practice, the comments give clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve the quality of their work.
- 77 The teachers' assessments are effectively standardised and moderated – internally and by working with other primary schools in the area. There are effective transfer plans with the secondary schools.
- 78 The quality of the annual reports to teachers is good and they give them clear information about their children's efforts and progress.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 79 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 80 The quality of the curriculum provided for pupils is an outstanding feature of the provision. The school provides equal access to a very broad and balanced curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills to particular good effect as they move through the school. The provision is socially inclusive and it ensures equality of access and opportunity for all.
- 81 The schemes of work for all curriculum subjects and the religious education syllabus are comprehensive and they provide teachers with an outstanding framework and guidelines. They have already been modified to conform to the latest requirements - *Curriculum 2008*. A wide range of practical, interesting and stimulating experiences are planned that succeed in having a positive impact, not only on the standards achieved by pupils, but also on their attitude to work.
- 82 The overall quality of the educational provision for under-fives is appropriate to their needs and the children make good progress towards the outcomes of the Foundation Phase.
- 83 The school gives a high priority to developing the pupils' key and basic skills and the opportunities to be promoted are identified within the teachers' planning. This is again an outstanding feature of the provision.

- 84 There is a very wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities, including numerous clubs, and regular visits are organised to different places which enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- 85 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively through a variety of experiences. The sessions of collective worship fulfil statutory requirements.
- 86 There are good links with the local community and the school takes part in a number of different activities that also promote pupils' understanding of the world of work.
- 87 The partnership with parents is an outstanding feature and this was reflected in the support voiced for the school at the pre-inspection meeting, and in the contents of the questionnaires, that without exception reflect very high levels of satisfaction with the provision made for their children.
- 88 There is a good relationship with catchment primary schools and with the two local secondary schools.
- 89 The provision for personal and social education is very good and it is introduced appropriately through timetabled lessons. The importance of relationships, preventing bullying and telling the truth are all issues that are well received by pupils.
- 90 The provision for developing pupils' bilingual proficiency is very sound and it gives pupils every opportunity to become fully bilingual by the end of their time at the school.
- 91 Good attention is given to the Welsh dimension within subjects across the curriculum and the experiences provided ensure that pupils are aware of their heritage and of the cultural traditions of their local area and nation.
- 92 The school has established good arrangements for promoting sustainable development and regular emphasis is placed on promoting care of the environment and issues related to recycling.
- 93 The pupils' awareness of citizenship and global citizenship is promoted effectively during services of collective worship and through their geography and religious education lessons. There are also useful links with a school in Spain and fair trade also receives due prominence within the curriculum.
- 94 The enterprise skills of Key Stage 2 pupils are promoted effectively as they play an active part in the production of the school paper *Clecs Cross*. They are responsible for designing, planning, marketing, funding and producing the paper before selling it to the public at the school's Summer Fair. The pupils are also responsible for running the fruit shop during break times.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 95 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 96 The quality of care, support and guidance offered to pupils is outstanding. The school is a close-knit and caring unit that greatly values and respects its pupils. The teachers know the pupils very well and they provide them with a very high degree of personal support and guidance. Pupils feel happy and entirely safe at school; they have absolute trust in the teachers and are happy to approach them immediately for assistance.
- 97 The way in which the school works with parents and carers in caring, supporting and guiding the pupils is an outstanding feature.
- 98 The induction programmes for the nursery children and the latecomers are well established.
- 99 There are clear and effective arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety. The school is a suitable and safe place to educate pupils and the teachers and support staff ensure their safety and contentment on the schoolyard. Risk assessments are conducted as required.
- 100 Through the School Council, pupils receive good opportunities to develop their awareness of citizenship, the importance of democracy and their right to express views on several aspects of the life of the school. It operates within guidelines.
- 101 There is a good level of awareness amongst pupils that enables them to be healthy. Priority is given to promoting healthy eating practices during snack times and they receive good opportunities to improve their fitness levels.
- 102 There have been no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection and the school deals effectively with any instances of unacceptable behaviour. The care exhibited by pupils towards each other is one of the school's strengths and they know that they will be treated fairly. This is an outstanding feature of the life and work of the school.
- 103 There are appropriate arrangements for monitoring attendance and punctuality and registers are kept according to requirements.
- 104 The school has an effective policy and procedures for child protection and all the teachers and support staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.
- 105 The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is particularly good and it satisfies in full the requirements of the Code of Practice. The quality of the individual education plans is very good and parents are invited to take part in

the review undertaken of them. Sound and comprehensive support is offered to pupils and this is an outstanding feature of the provision. It enables the pupils to make good progress according to their ability and to take full advantage of the life and work of the whole school.

- 106 The school succeeds in nurturing positive attitudes amongst pupils on issues such as acknowledging diversity and promoting equality on the basis of race, background and gender. Equal opportunities are provided across curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 107 Praise and commendation are given in the morning services in order to recognise academic and other successes.
- 108 Reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not treated less favourably. The school has produced an accessibility plan, in accordance with the requirements of the Disability and Special Educational Needs Act 2001.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 109 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report to the extent that the school has awarded Grade 2 for this key question. In coming to a view, the school gave insufficient recognition to the outstanding elements to be found in its leadership.
- 110 The quality of leadership at the school is outstanding. The headteacher co-ordinates the work of the governing body, teachers and support staff very effectively in order to give clear strategic direction to the development of the school and to ensure that it works continuously to raise standards. Expectations are very high; common values and norms are shared with regard to learning, behaviour and relationships. Teamwork is an outstanding feature of the provision.
- 111 Highly effective management systems have been established. There are very clear lines of communication. Subject co-ordinators shoulder a good measure of responsibility, they fulfil their duties effectively and everyone is encouraged to be actively involved in the life and work of the school.
- 112 The school has a range of good quality management and curricular policies to support its work. They have been thoughtfully designed and there are clear procedures for their revision. The staff and the governing body play a full part in this process.
- 113 The school gives careful consideration to national and local priorities and it is alert to the latest educational developments.

- 114 There is considerable emphasis on managing and improving staff performance. Very sound monitoring and evaluation arrangements are used, and a high priority is given to their continuous professional development.
- 115 The governing body makes a very good contribution to the work of the school. The governors are very knowledgeable about their responsibilities; they have a good range of backgrounds and expertise, and they are used to very good effect. Individual members have been given responsibility for specific areas of the curriculum, and through the headteacher's regular reports, meetings with curriculum co-ordinators, monitoring reports and presentations by members of staff at meetings of the governing body, they have a good awareness of the school curriculum, its performance and the factors that impinge upon it. They fulfil their responsibilities very thoroughly, operate as a critical friend and play a proactive role in helping to set the strategic direction of the school. They co-operate very well with the professional staff and fully satisfy their legal responsibilities, with the exception of minor shortcomings in the annual report that is distributed to parents.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 116 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report to the extent that the school has awarded Grade 2 for this key question. The culture of self-criticism that exists at the school, together with the comprehensive procedures that are in place to evaluate quality and standards are outstanding features.
- 117 Curricular leaders play a key role in the self-evaluation arrangements. They use a number of different sources, including professional dialogue, monitoring curricular schemes, together with sampling and moderating pupils' work, in order to come to a view on the standards achieved in the areas for which they are responsible. There are outstanding links between the outcomes of these processes and the priorities for the further development of the school.
- 118 Data is carefully analysed in order to compare the school's performance with that of others, although in this case there is room to pay more attention to pupil performance against national benchmarking data. Very careful consideration is given to any differences in the performance of boys and girls, and to the performance of pupils with additional learning needs. Again, the development plans address these issues.
- 119 The whole-school targets that are set are ambitious but achievable, and they are based on an assessment of the expected performance of each individual pupil.
- 120 Through its School Council and the questionnaires distributed to pupils, staff and parents, the school has an outstanding body of information about their opinions and ideas, that effectively inform future planning.

- 121 The School Development Plan is a working document that helps to set the school's strategic direction. It is the result of the collective efforts of the headteacher, staff and governors. Developments are planned carefully and the expected outcomes, together with the proposed monitoring methods, are noted. Operational responsibilities are allocated to individuals, resources are earmarked as required and progress is carefully monitored. It is a very effective tool.
- 122 The self-evaluation report produced for the inspectors presents a very cogent view of the position of the school. It identifies areas and aspects that are strengths, and highlights those areas that require further attention, whilst constantly focussing on the efforts to raise standards. The judgements are supported by evidence from a number of different sources.
- 123 The findings of the inspection team match the school's judgement in its self-evaluation report in five of the seven key questions. The school was too conservative in its judgement on management and leadership, and higher grades were awarded by the inspectors for Key Questions 5 and 6.
- 124 The school has made very good progress in acting on the key issues identified in the 2002 report.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 125 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 126 Teachers at the school possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the curriculum, and likewise the skilled classroom assistants and volunteers who work very effectively with them.
- 127 Good arrangements have been made to promote professional development and teachers are very familiar with exchanging their classes and responsibilities. This has a positive impact on the ability of the staff to work coherently as a team and on the standards achieved by pupils.
- 128 There are effective arrangements for reducing the teachers' workload and for providing them with non-contact time for planning, preparation and assessment.
- 129 The school has a good supply of resources, including the interactive whiteboards and computers for the entire age range.
- 130 The buildings are well maintained and standards of cleanliness and tidiness are high.
- 131 The building is not wholly suitable for people with physical disabilities.

- 132 The school makes effective use of resources, in the community and further afield, in order to promote the pupils' learning experiences.
- 133 The internal environment of the school is an outstanding feature. Great care is taken to celebrate pupils' work through attractive, stimulating and interesting displays in all areas.
- 134 Expenditure decisions are effectively reconciled to school priorities. The headteacher and governing body manage the budget carefully and the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Welsh

Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 135 Across both key stages, pupils are good listeners.
- 136 Pupils in Key Stage 1 offer correct and confident answers to questions that derive from lesson presentations. They explain what they mean in appropriate language and a number use the local dialect in a wholly natural way.
- 137 In Key Stage 2, pupils succeed very well in developing their ability to discuss their tasks in pairs. They use a variety of local words and vivid idioms.
- 138 Pupils across Key Stage 1 have a good awareness of stories. They enjoy stories such as '*Cwmp y Dail*', and '*Jac y Do*' and confidently use the vocabulary within them. They identify and display empathy with the characters in a story and understand how books work. They can follow a story line successfully and use contextual clues to help them. The majority read fluently and show a good understanding of the content of their reading books.
- 139 Pupils in Key Stage 2 read well. They show a good understanding of the books that are appropriate to their ability. They discover information, making good use of library skills.
- 140 In Key Stage 1, a considerable number of pupils achieve good standards in their written work. In their stories and descriptive pieces, they show good progress in their use of different forms of syntax, link words and adjectives and they make regular use of basic punctuation in their work.
- 141 Pupils in Key Stage 2 write in a wide range of forms for different audiences. They make correct use of punctuation and their awareness of paragraphing is developing well. In the main, they effectively transfer their grammatical exercises to their creative writing tasks. A good number produce interesting and

lively work, particularly so in Year 6.

Shortcomings

142 There are no important shortcomings.

Science

Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 143 Pupils in Key Stage 1 respond well to a task relating to classifying materials into categories, such as natural and man made materials. They quickly learn about the difference between a solid and a liquid, and make meaningful contributions to a discussion of the materials that change when they are heated or cooled.
- 144 Their knowledge and understanding of plants is developing well. They know about the conditions that beans require to grow healthily and have observed their growth over a period of time.
- 145 They can produce simple electrical circuits and are aware of the domestic equipment that require electricity in order to work.
- 146 They recognise parts of the body according to their correct terms and are able to classify animate and inanimate objects as required.
- 147 In Key Stage 2, pupils have conducted successful investigations into the conditions that leaves need in order to grow well, vibration and the effect of tension on the strings on musical instruments, together with the effect of shadows on rounder posts on the schoolyard. They show good prediction skills when engaged in this work.
- 148 By taking part in various activities on the school yard, they come to understand the impact this has on their heart beats.
- 149 They have investigated habitats and have formed a conclusion as to the preferred habitat of woodlice. With their teacher's assistance, they come to be able to draw up an investigation into the types of foods best liked by snails.
- 150 They know how switches control light in circuits and understand that taking a bulb out of a circuit can create a gap in that circuit. They can differentiate effectively between materials that are good electrical conductors and those that are not.
- 151 They have a good level of knowledge of the Earth and the Planets.

Shortcomings

152 In Key Stage 2, pupils do not display the expected levels of independence when preparing their investigations.

Design and technology

Key Stage 1 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

- 153 Pupils in both key stages have an outstanding understanding of the importance of research as part of the design process. They look at a wide range of objects and products and consider a number of different possibilities before actually making the product in question. They exhibit high levels of confidence in their work and the variety seen in their ideas and their finished articles is impressive.
- 154 The knowledge and understanding that Key Stage 2 pupils have of food technology is outstanding. They regularly design and make foods that include sandwiches, soup, paella and healthy *flap jacks*. By shopping locally themselves, this work has made a considerable contribution to their awareness of Fair Trade and of ingredients that are healthy for them.

Good features

- 155 Pupils in Key Stage 1 engage very successfully in assignments in which they design and make products. They develop their own ideas by making a number of freehand drawings before selecting the most suitable idea for the task.
- 156 They assemble, join and combine a wide range of materials and components, whilst keeping an eye on their products, as seen in their recent work on puppets related to the story *Hugan Fach Goch*. They make effective use of simple mechanisms to create models of flowers in pots. They can identify the main strengths of their work and are able to note how improvements could be made.
- 157 Their recent work studying different foods has led to them designing and making fruit kebabs. A number of good ideas were then suggested before they set out to prepare their designs that take into account the arrangement of the fruits on sticks.
- 158 The designs produced by Key Stage 2 pupils show a good awareness of the characteristics of materials, such as strength and flexibility, and they can select the most appropriate material and medium for completing the task in question, such as making a shoe or container to hold their writing equipment. They have a clear understanding of the requirements of a task and make a number of rough designs before selecting the one that is best suited to their work.
- 159 They use building kits to make models that have moving parts and make effective use of electrical components to create special effects within them.
- 160 They intelligently evaluate their finished articles and make certain modifications in order to improve their effectiveness.

Shortcomings

161 There are no important shortcomings.

Geography

Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Outstanding features

162 The recent fieldwork undertaken by Key Stage 1 pupils relating to the study of a contrasting area such as the beach at Ferryside has outstandingly promoted their understanding of the differences between the physical and human characteristics of the area in question and Cross Hands.

Good features

163 The mapping skills of Key Stage 1 pupils are developing appropriately. By investigating a plan of their school they can create a correct key for the different classes. They can effectively plot a journey through the plan of a park.

164 By keeping regular records over a period of time, they have learned about a variety of symbols that represent weather.

165 They know about the main features of Allt y Fyrddin farm, the use made of its buildings and have a good understanding of the calendar of the farming year.

166 Pupils' understanding of location is developing well. They make correct use of terms such as *close*, *very close* and *far*. They can place in order a series of pictures that correctly indicate their school trip to Carmarthen through the different villages.

167 They can correctly use an alphanumeric grid in order to locate different buildings according to the directions they have been given.

168 Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good knowledge of their local area and of Wales in general. Their visits around the locality enhance their experiences and deepen their geographical knowledge and understanding.

169 The awareness of the younger pupils in this key stage of their individual responsibility for the environment is developing well. They have learned about the problems associated with landfill and about the importance of waste recycling.

170 Older pupils investigate and compare their local area with other areas, both nationally and internationally, in a very effective and mature fashion. They make detailed comparisons of the nature of their environment, economy, lifestyle and climate. The work on Ghana and following the journey of a cocoa bean 'From Grain to Sale' has been completed very thoroughly.

- 171 They ask and respond to geographical questions in a very purposeful and detailed manner. They use a good variety of maps and atlases, exhibiting good map reading skills.

Shortcomings

- 172 Some pupils in Key Stage 2 are somewhat unsure when using co-ordinates.

Art and design

Key Stage 1 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key Stage 2 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

- 173 The breadth and depth of pupils' knowledge and understanding are outstanding features across both key stages. The quality and range of the artwork they produce are impressive and they make an important contribution to the visual environment of the school.

Good features

- 174 In Key Stage 1, pupils use a good range of materials and techniques across a range of activities. They work confidently, using a range of different media.
- 175 In their printing work, pupils respond well to the stimulus of fruit. They can make suitable choices with minimal assistance to create high standard work.
- 176 They use their sketchbooks effectively to record ideas and practise techniques. They show a good developing awareness of tone, form and pattern.
- 177 In Key Stage 2, pupils are very familiar with the styles and techniques of the artists they study. They can effectively compare and contrast their work with that produced by others, and they skilfully discuss the atmosphere of pictures and the effect of light and colour. Highly successful examples were seen of emulating the styles of artists such as Andy Warhol, Ivor Davies, Pip Woolf and Ceri Richards.
- 178 The older pupils are able to confidently create and express new ideas. They have a good understanding of a variety of techniques such as collage, painting with watercolours or acrylic paint and creating effective three-dimensional work.
- 179 The opportunities they receive to work with professional artists and to contribute to projects such as *The Big Draw* at Oriel Myrddin, make a considerable contribution to their development in art.

Shortcomings

- 180 There are no important shortcomings.

Religious education

Key Stage 1 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 2 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 181 In both key stages, pupils express their feelings confidently.
- 182 In Key Stage 1, they have a good knowledge of a wide range of Biblical stories such as the Good Samaritan and Jesus' journey to Jerusalem at Easter time.
- 183 They have learned about the wonder of Creation and God's commission to man to safeguard it.
- 184 They know that Christians worship in a chapel or church and have learned about some of the main differences in the baptism ritual held within them.
- 185 They show an awareness of the Buddhist religion by learning about *Siddhartha*, the founder of the Buddhist faith who is worshipped as a god by some, and they have a good developing understanding of the importance of a festival such as *Diwali* to Hindus.
- 186 In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to effectively recall stories related to the religious tradition in Wales, such as the story of Mari Jones and Bishop William Morgan, the importance of the Bible to them and their contribution to us.
- 187 Their studies of *Holy Books* have taught them how to find their way through the Bible and they come to know about the Psalms and the Gospels and the meaning of parable.
- 188 They have learned how important it is for Muslims to fast during *Ramadan* and that it creates a feeling of support and brotherhood amongst Muslims.
- 189 They know about festivals that are unique to Jews such as *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkot*. They know about the main aspects of the *Chanukah* – Festival of Light celebration, its historical background, and have investigated practices related to this festival, such as making *Chanukah* cards, cooking *latkes* and creating a *dreidel* game.

Shortcomings

- 190 There are no important shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

The members of the governing and all teaching and support staff at Ysgol Cross Hands take pride in the positive report that was received, that reflects the excellent work achieved here.

We would like to extend our grateful thanks to Mr Martin Cray and his inspection team for their professionalism during the inspection and for the perceptive comments they have offered that will enable us to continue with our efforts to maintain and build on the high standards and expectations.

It was encouraging to receive a report that matches very closely the findings of the school's Self-Evaluation and that provides guidance for future development. It was pleasing to receive confirmation that the quality of the curriculum and the care, support and guidance offered to pupils are an outstanding feature of the life and work of the school. It was gratifying also to receive confirmation that 'highly challenging activities that are infectious in their ability to stimulate pupils' interest and imagination' are planned and prepared.

We take pride in the praise given to the children for their 'positive attitude towards learning and the interest they show in their work', and the confirmation that 'they use their time productively in lessons'.

We are also very proud of the acknowledgement that Ysgol Cross Hands is a 'close-knit and caring community that greatly values and respects its pupils' and that 'the partnership with parents is an outstanding feature' of the life of the school.

The success of Ysgol Cross Hands is the result of the tireless commitment and hard work of all the teaching staff and support staff, the limitless support of the governors and parents and the commendable motivation and efforts of the children, and we are very pleased that this receives the recognition that it merits.

The school will now produce an action plan in response to the recommendations of the inspectorate, to be shared with all parents and incorporated in the school development plan.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gynradd Cross Hands
School type	Nursery and Primary
Age-range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Address of school	Carmarthen Road Cross Hands Llanelli
Post-code	SA14 6SU
Telephone number	(01269) 842764
Headteacher	Mrs Manon Wyn Jones
Date of appointment	1 September 2005
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Roy James
Reporting inspector	D M Cray
Dates of inspection	13 – 15 October 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	10.5	22	13	15	18	19	14	14	125.5

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	6	2	6.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	17:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	5:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	--
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	23
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.36:1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Autumn 2007	88.2%	88.0%	92.24%
Spring 2008	88.8%	92.2%	94.24%
Summer 2008	92.1%	87.2%	93.02%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results: End of Key Stage 1

National Curriculum Assessment KS 1 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y2:						18	
Percentage of pupils at each level										
			D	N	W	1	2	3	2+	
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School				22	61	17	78	
		National			2	10	63	26	88	
Welsh: Oracy	Teacher Assessment	School				22	61	17	78	
		National			2	10	62	25	88	
Welsh: Reading	Teacher Assessment	School				22	61	17	78	
		National			2	15	59	23	82	
Welsh: Writing	Teacher Assessment	School				22	61	17	78	
		National			3	19	66	12	78	
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School				22	50	28	78	
		National			2	11	65	24	89	
Science	Teacher Assessment	School				22	50	28	78	
		National			1	9	66	24	89	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	78%	In Wales	80%

National Curriculum Assessment Results: End of Key Stage 2

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008			Number of pupils in Y6						17		
Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	N	W	1	2	3	4	5	4+
English	Teacher assessment	School							29	65	94
		National				1	4	16	50	29	79
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School							53	29	82
		National	1	1	1	1	5	19	49	24	73
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School							53	41	94
		National				1	3	15	50	30	80
Science	Teacher assessment	School							76	24	100
		National					2	12	52	32	85

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	94%	In Wales	74%

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under statutory arrangements, or those for whom teachers were unable to provide an assessment.
- N Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than disapplication
- W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Three inspectors, including the school's nominee, spent the equivalent of seven inspector days in the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- Thirty two lessons or part lessons; 25 in the six subjects inspected and 7 in other subjects;
- registrations, assemblies and acts of collective worship; and
- a range of extra curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection;
- senior managers, teachers, support and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group;
- the school council; and
- representatives of organisations associated with the school.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- forty two responses to a parents' questionnaire;
- documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- a wide range of pupils' past and current work; and
- samples of pupils' reports.

After the inspection team held meetings with subject departments, senior managers and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspects	Subjects/areas of learning
Mr D M Cray	Rgl	Context; Summary; Recommendations; Annexes; Key questions 1; 2; 5; 6 and 7.	Science; design and technology; geography; religious education
Mr A Williams	Team	Key questions 3 and 4.	Welsh; art
Mrs M Donovan	Lay	Contributions to key questions 1; 3; 4 and 7	
Mr H G Gruffydd	Peer Assessor	Contributions to key questions	Contributions to subjects

School's Nominee: Mrs Manon Wyn Jones

Contractor: Arolygiadau Deheubarth Inspections; Afallon; Heol Llandeilo; Gorslas; Llanelli; SA14 7LU.

Acknowledgement

The visiting inspectors wish to thank the governors, the head and all the staff for the co-operation and courtesy they received during the inspection.