



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran  
Dolwen Road  
Llysfaen  
Conwy  
LL29 8SS**

**Date of inspection: December 2010**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**© Crown Copyright 2011: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.**

## Context

Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran is situated in the semi-rural village of Llysfaen on the outskirts of Colwyn Bay. The school opened in 1992 and has recently been extensively remodelled. The school admits children to the reception class at four years of age.

There are 158 full-time pupils on roll and a further 15 pupils attend a part-time nursery class. Entry to the nursery class is controlled by Conwy County Council. There are seven classes taught by five full-time teachers, and seven part-time teachers. There are four full-time and two part-time learning support assistants.

The school describes the area it serves as neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Approximately 19% of pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM). This is above local but close to national averages. Currently, there are two pupils who are looked after by the local authority.

English is the predominant language for all pupils. At present there is one pupil receiving support for English as an additional language (EAL) and no pupils who use Welsh as a first language.

Base line indications show that attainment on entry to the school is below the expected level. Approximately 31% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs. This is significantly above local averages. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. Two pupils received a fixed-term exclusion in the last year.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to the management structure and senior leadership of the school. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009 and the deputy headteacher since January 2010.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran is £3,246, which compares with a maximum of £9,816 and a minimum of £2,909 for primary schools in Conwy. The school has the 51st highest budget per pupil out of the 61 primary schools in Conwy.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The overall judgement for the school is good because:

- most pupils make appropriate progress;
- most teaching is of a high quality; and
- pupils' wellbeing is of a high standard.

### Prospects for improvement

The judgement for prospects for improvement is good because:

- leaders and managers provide effective leadership;
- the school has effective self-evaluation procedures;
- the school has made good progress in addressing areas for improvement; and
- all staff show a positive commitment to school improvement.

## Recommendations

The school needs to:

R1 improve teachers' planning to improve progression and raise pupils' standards, especially amongst boys, in reading and writing across the curriculum;

R2 raise standards of achievement for more able pupils, particularly in key stage 2;

R3 improve the assessment of pupils' work to provide more appropriate challenge for pupils of all ability; and

R4 improve the role of governors as a critical friend of the school.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Many pupils begin school with skills below those expected for their age. In the Foundation Phase and in Year 2, pupils make very good progress, settling quickly into school routines, and become increasingly confident learners. Reading and writing improve quickly from a low starting point. Very young pupils speak confidently in Welsh to staff and other pupils.

In key stage 2, many pupils make more than the expected progress. They do well in their numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) skills. However, by the end of Year 6, a minority of pupils' reading and writing skills are not sufficiently well developed to enable them to achieve the appropriate standards across the curriculum.

Throughout the school, many pupils have very good standards of speaking and listening. For example, Year 2 pupils explain clearly and logically what they expect to happen in a science experiment; whilst older pupils have led, without staff help, the last two successful applications for Healthy School status.

Girls significantly attain better than boys in both key stages and the gap is widening. Pupils with additional learning needs and those entitled to free school meals make appropriate progress and most achieve well.

Almost all pupils work well together in teams. For example, Year 1 pupils co-operate well using building blocks and Year 6 pupils work effectively to investigate aspects of eco-systems in Wales.

In Welsh second language, pupils make very good progress, especially in the Foundation Phase. By the end of key stage 2, standards in Welsh are good.

Pupils generally attain better than local and national averages at the end of key stage 1. When compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level at the end of key stage 1 is in the top 25% for science and in the top 50% for mathematics, but in the lowest 50% for English. In the core subject indicator (CSI), which shows the percentage of pupils at seven years of age achieving the expected level or above in English, mathematics and science, the school performance is also in the lowest 50% of schools.

Trends over the last three years show that overall standards in key stage 1 are improving. Compared to its family of schools, the school has the best results in science, and is about average for mathematics and English. Attainment above the expected level in key stage 1 is one of the best in its family.

In 2010, in key stage 2, pupils' performance was in the lowest 50% for English and mathematics but in the top 25% for science when compared to similar schools. This is slightly below attainment levels for the previous three years.

Compared to its family of schools, the school performance is about average for mathematics and science but below average in English and the core subject indicator. Pupils' performance above the expected level (level 5) at key stage 2 is below local and national averages.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils are enthusiastic, attentive learners, and courteous and friendly. They work well in lessons and show care, respect and concern for others. Almost all pupils behave very well, are confident and show increasingly mature attitudes as they move through the school. Through their choice of meals and participation in a range of physical activities, almost all pupils demonstrate a very clear appreciation of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Nearly all pupils say that the school deals well with any bullying and that they feel safe in school.

Many pupils take on additional responsibilities such as membership of the school or eco-councils, head boy and head girl, running the school fruit shop or as playground buddies. An indication of their maturity is found in the deep pride they take in these roles and in their understanding of how decisions they make influence the experiences of other pupils. For example, pupils' hard work has improved the standard and range of the healthy options for meals and snacks; reduced waste and saved energy; and helped improve the local community by the planting of flowers and removal of litter. In addition, pupils take part in many community activities such as fund-raising for charities, local recycling events, or cultural and sporting events.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the importance of Fair Trade and environmental issues is outstanding. They use their expertise well to improve the school environment and the lives of others. For example, work by pupils has resulted in several Premiership football teams adopting Fair Trade goods in their shops and cafés.

Members of the school council meet with governors to discuss issues raised by the pupils. Many pupils believe and recognise that their views influence how their school develops, but as yet only pupils in the Foundation Phase are making decisions about how and what they learn.

Attendance, at over 95%, is better than local and national averages and places the school amongst the best performers in its family.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
---	-------------

### **Learning experiences: Good**

Pupils receive a broad and balanced education which effectively builds on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills. Strategies such as withdrawing groups to support pupils with literacy and numeracy contribute significantly to developing

pupils' confidence and raising their attainment. The recently introduced phonics programme in the early years successfully supports many younger pupils to make rapid progress in reading and writing. Staff generally provide appropriate opportunities for many pupils to develop their skills across all subjects. However, in key stage 2 staff do not always plan effectively for progression in pupils' reading and writing skills across the curriculum. In particular, there are few opportunities for pupils to write at length, mainly due to an excessive use of worksheets.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is a strength of the school and an integral part of its life. Many lessons follow the theme of the environment and sustainability. These engage pupils particularly successfully and contribute to their deep understanding of the issues involved. Older pupils have links with schools in India and Japan. This allows them to learn about the lives and cultures of other children.

Provision for Welsh language development enables pupils to make good progress. There is an appropriate delivery of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig through, for example, studying Welsh artists and visits to St Fagans, Conwy Castle, Plas Mawr and the Millennium Stadium.

Out-of-school visits, activities and special events, including residential trips to the Urdd camp at Glanllyn, enhance pupils' experiences. Pupils participate well in a number of sporting activities including netball, football and swimming events.

### **Teaching: Good**

Most teaching is good or better. Where it is excellent, lessons have considerable pace. Staff challenge and inspire pupils and have high expectations of them, enabling pupils to make very good progress. In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, tasks are not matched well to pupils' needs, there is over use of worksheets and pupils are not fully engaged in learning.

Support staff are used effectively. They work alongside teachers to provide pupils with well-focused support and feedback in their learning experiences.

Staff track pupils' progress effectively and use the information to diagnose additional support needs for pupils and to inform future planning. Assessment at the end of both key stages is appropriate. Staff regularly assess pupils' work so that pupils know how they are doing and what to do to improve their work. This allows pupils to focus on their targets and work towards meeting these. When assessing pupils' work, staff do not do enough to challenge pupils' underperformance in order to improve their standards of achievement.

Parents and carers are well informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. Pupils' wellbeing is promoted effectively, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. Almost all pupils and their parents feel able to approach staff for advice and guidance when needed. Adults and pupils show respect for each other. Staff encourage all pupils to take a full part in the life of the school. Pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated. These contribute well to the very high standards of pupils' wellbeing.

Support for pupils with additional learning needs is well planned, delivered and evaluated. The school works effectively with a number of outside agencies such as the school nurse, educational psychologist and speech and language services. These services provide strong support for pupils and offer appropriate advice and help to staff. Individual learning and behaviour plans are regularly evaluated and updated and parents are kept well informed and fully involved.

Good links exist with local pre-school playgroups and high schools creating effective induction and transition programmes.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school has a fully inclusive ethos, where everyone is valued and treated fairly and equally. The curriculum is fully accessible to all. There are good arrangements for ensuring that pupils with disabilities do not receive less favourable treatment within the school.

A wide range of good quality teaching resources are used effectively to meet pupils' needs. Accommodation is of very good quality, with many attractive displays of pupils' work and achievements. The building is well maintained.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
--	-------------

### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher and the recently established senior management team provide effective leadership. Regular senior management team and staff meetings are effective in reviewing a range of data to help ensure that the aims and strategic plans of the school are identified and developed appropriately.

Leaders and managers promote high expectations amongst the staff. Effective performance management arrangements help communicate these high expectations and set challenging targets for all staff. Whole-school and individual training needs are identified and addressed appropriately. Responsibility for leading projects is devolved effectively to staff. These help secure the strong sense of school improvement.

Governors are appropriately involved in prioritising areas for improvement and monitoring the progress of the school development plan. Regular presentations by the head and staff ensure that they are well informed about curricular and organisational developments. However, governors do not sufficiently challenge the school on the standards it achieves.

School policies and procedures fully meet national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase has been successfully established and appropriate planning for its ongoing development is in place. The principles of the School Effectiveness Framework are a developing feature within the school's work.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation procedures are well embedded in the school. Leaders effectively analyse data and a wide range of other evidence to monitor performance and identify priorities for improvement. Self-evaluation also draws on information from the local authority, pupils and parents. However, rigorous monitoring and assessment of pupils' work are not yet used effectively enough to raise standards of achievement.

Priorities from self-evaluation link clearly to the school development plan. The plan is realistic, challenging and well resourced. In a short time, the senior management team have put innovative plans into place to address many of the areas where pupils' attainment is not as good as it could be. These plans include projects with the local primary and secondary schools to improve boys' literacy skills and to further challenge more able and talented pupils. The developing work of professional learning communities within the school, especially within the Foundation Phase and the Year 2 class, contributes well to identifying and promoting good practice in teaching and assessment.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has established a good range of partnerships with other schools, higher education institutions, the school nurse and local community groups. These contribute well to the activities available for pupils and help to improve their progress and standards of wellbeing.

Work with other cluster schools to develop transition arrangements into secondary school has helped strengthen continuity in learning and wellbeing. Staff work successfully with other local schools to ensure that teacher assessments at the end of key stage 2 are accurate. Local secondary school staff work with the school in newly devised curriculum projects. It is too early to measure the impact of these initiatives on pupils' standards.

### **Resource management: Good**

Staffing resources are well managed and used effectively to support teaching and learning. Support and administrative staff contribute successfully to the effective day-to-day operation of the school. There are plenty of good quality teaching resources. Spending is effectively linked to the priorities within the school improvement plan.

Most pupils make good progress, achieve levels expected for their age and have very high standards of wellbeing. As a result, the school gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Pupil questionnaires**

Nearly 90 pupils completed the questionnaire and nearly all are very positive about the education and support they receive in Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran. However, around a fifth of pupils believe that other children do not behave well in lessons and prevent them from getting their work done and a very few pupils think that they are not doing well in school.

#### **Parent questionnaires**

Fifty-six parents and carers completed the questionnaire. Almost all are satisfied with Ysgol Gynradd Cynfran. They agree that the school provides well for the pupils, offers good support and enables them to make good progress. A very few parents do not understand the schools procedures for dealing with complaints and do not believe that pupils behave well.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Richard Hawkley HMI	Reporting Inspector
Iwan Roberts HMI	Team Inspector
James Kerry Jones	Lay Inspector
Janet Rowlands	Peer Inspector
Susan Palmer	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

## 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 five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	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 four key stages cover the following year groups:

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