



*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 Crug Glas  
Croft Street  
Swansea  
SA1 1QA**

**Date of inspection: February 2011**

**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.

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## Context

Ysgol Crug Glas is a special school for pupils with multiple or severe and complex learning difficulties in the City and County of Swansea. Many have associated communication, behavioural or sensory difficulties, and a significant number have very specific health-care requirements.

The school has 47 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 19 years. Most pupils come from the Swansea area and a few come from other local authorities. Each pupil has statement of special educational needs (SEN). Just over a fifth of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Many pupils in school have 'looked-after child' (LAC) status because they receive respite residential provision during the year. There are seven LAC pupils in foster or shared care and three pupils from minority ethnic groups. There is one pupil from a Welsh-speaking home.

The school aims to provide a very broad curriculum based on sensory-based activities which integrate learning with therapy and a high quality of care. The school employs its own school nurses and a music therapist. The school has a hydrotherapy pool, dark room, white room and soft play room as well as a rebound therapy facility.

The facilities are also used by pupils with special educational needs who are educated in mainstream schools throughout the City and County of Swansea. Ysgol Crug Glas employs an outreach teacher who provides support, advice, training and a resource-lending service to staff working with pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.

The school aims to be a strong, vibrant and happy community which:

- puts the needs of the pupils first so that they reach their individual potential;
- provides enjoyable and challenging learning experiences to prepare pupils for life;
- encourages pupils to communicate in an effective and acceptable way;
- works with local partners to provide a high quality education for pupils with special educational needs; and
- develops its staff.

The school has links with Swansea Metropolitan University to provide a specialist Graduate Diploma course for teachers.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Ysgol Crug Glas is an excellent school because:

- pupils achieve good standards across the school;
- staff capture and build on pupils' very small steps of progress;
- there is excellent provision for pupils' health and wellbeing;
- staff management of pupils' behaviour is exemplary;
- the school has outstanding systems for tracking and analysing information about pupils' progress;
- parents and pupils receive outstanding care, support and guidance;
- the school shares its good practice with a wide range of partners including those in other countries; and
- the well-regarded graduate diploma course for teachers and staff who work with pupils with multiple or severe and complex learning difficulties has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because:

- senior managers and the governors have a very clear vision for the school which is shared by all staff;
- leadership is well distributed across the staff;
- there is an exceptional culture of rigorous self-evaluation that leads to school improvement;
- staff performance is managed very carefully;
- fundraising by parents has led to significant improvements in provision; and
- the school manages its resources rigorously and provides good value for money.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve further, the staff and governors of Ysgol Crug Glas should:

R1 continue to widen curriculum opportunities for the very few more able pupils;

R2 make sure that the content of planned activities for young adults is always age appropriate; and

R3 re-consider the disapplication of all pupils from learning the Welsh language.

### **What happens next?**

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

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

Excellent

#### Standards: Good

Across the school, pupils achieve good standards in relation to their learning needs and abilities. Programmes are individually tailored and it is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve with national averages or to analyse trends in overall performance over time. There are seven LAC pupils in foster or shared care. All are making good or very good progress. Three pupils from minority ethnic groups have all made good progress over the last three years.

Due to their very complex learning needs, pupils often make almost imperceptible or very small steps of progress. All pupils make good progress in achieving the agreed learning targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs). Nearly all pupils gain a range of appropriate qualifications in accredited courses designed to support independent living and move on successfully to other provision. These qualifications include ASDAN Transition Challenge and EQUALS Moving On.

Less able pupils use augmentative communication well, to make their needs known and express choices. For example, they use information and communications technology (ICT) to operate switches. They learn to make eye contact, become more aware of their bodies and follow sequences of movements. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make good progress through the phases of the Picture Exchange Communication System. A few more able pupils achieve National Curriculum outcomes in English at a level appropriate to their ability.

More able pupils gain the important skills that they need to increase their independence such as handling money, shopping and cooking. They are responsible for re-stocking the school tuck shop. They use ICT well to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

According to their statements of SEN, no pupils are required to learn the Welsh language. However, in relation to their individual needs, most pupils make adequate progress in the Welsh language and a small minority are making good progress.

#### Wellbeing: Excellent

Pupils enjoy their lessons and attend school regularly, unless they have periods of illness due to medical conditions. Parents and carers recognise that their children's health needs are looked after well and that their children feel safe and benefit from their time at school.

Pupils understand and respond to instructions. They are encouraged to show their likes, dislikes and wishes in all situations. They listen very carefully to staff, learn to take turns and are very keen to join in the activities planned for them. They respond enthusiastically to the positive and regular feedback that they receive from staff.

Pupils are very proud when staff recognise and record their achievement using accessible means of recording such as photographs or DVDs.

Pupils benefit from a very good range of therapies all carefully designed to maintain their health and emotional wellbeing.

Throughout their school day, staff make exceptional use of music to help pupils keep calm and engaged. For example, pupils often begin lessons with warm ups to music designed to awake the senses so that they are alert and ready to learn.

Pupils benefit from highly detailed personal communication passports which give all staff thorough knowledge of pupils' abilities, what they like and dislike and how they prefer to communicate. Because staff fully understand how best to approach each pupil's learning and meet their physical and emotional needs in the classroom, pupils are able to feel confident, settle quickly and fully engage with the tasks set. The very good use of the picture exchange communication system, timelines and routines, across the school, helps pupils who do not use language to know what to expect. They begin to take the lead, gain confidence and more independence, and take a more active part in decisions about themselves and their school life.

Due to the very well-planned and focused in-class support, pupils generally behave very well. Most pupils with the most challenging behaviour learn to co-operate over time, improve their self-control and become more aware of the needs of others.

Through the use of advocates such as parents and carers and support staff, all pupils are able to influence school life. For example, they asked for improvements to the access to the front door of the school.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

Overall, the curriculum is suitably adapted to meet the complex needs and abilities of the pupils. The school provides a wide range of enriching and engaging learning experiences. These include sensory experiences for pupils with the most complex needs. Subject co-ordinators use the school's own skills framework effectively to plan for continuity and progression in all areas of learning. The school has begun to widen the curriculum appropriately for the very few more able pupils who have recently joined the school. However, on a very few occasions the content of planned activities is not always well matched to the interests of young adults.

Staff work together very well to provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their early cognitive skills. They provide pupils with well-planned opportunities to develop a range of communication skills which do not rely on the spoken or written word, for example using the picture exchange system and Makaton. They promote pupils' independence, numeracy and ICT skills effectively through well-planned individual education plans and activities.

The school provides a very wide range of educational visits including to the local supermarket, the maritime museum and the Gower coast. The visits are linked closely to the curriculum and develop pupils' independence well.

Welsh language provision is developing well across the school. The inclusion of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig contributes effectively to pupils' understanding of the cultural and historical context of Wales.

Where appropriate, pupils experience the world of work. One pupil attends a day centre and works on recycling furniture, choosing and using the tools independently. A few pupils move on to or attend further education colleges. There is good provision to promote pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. The school has achieved the second Eco Schools Green Flag award and pupils participate in a range of activities to promote sustainability including recycling, energy conservation and Forest Schools.

### **Teaching: Excellent**

All staff have a very thorough, up-to-date knowledge of effective teaching approaches and use these consistently throughout the school. Many staff have made good use of the graduate diploma, set up by the school, to improve their practice. Teachers' planning is directly linked to careful assessment and to the pupils' comprehensive individual education plans. Planning provides specific activities that will help pupils achieve their individual targets.

Teachers make highly effective use of a wide range of resources and activities to engage all pupils' interest and meet their individual needs. They plan stimulating and interesting learning activities that engage and challenge pupils.

Learning support assistants and teachers work very well together to plan and deliver lessons in a very supportive environment. All staff make very good use of a range of ICT and augmentative communication, including signs and symbols, to develop pupils' communication skills well.

Staff management of pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They use a wide range of strategies to make sure that all lessons engage pupils appropriately. All staff intervene sensitively to help pupils stay on task and join in all activities. Where pupils' behaviour is very challenging, the approach that staff take is positive and rigorous.

The school has outstanding systems for tracking, analysing and recording information about pupils' progress. These very high quality assessment and reporting procedures devised by the school make sure that teachers and support staff capture pupils' very small steps of progress so that they can plan opportunities to build on this progress.

Teachers keep clear, manageable and informative records on each pupil. This enables the school to provide well-targeted support for pupils, where appropriate.



Pupils' records of achievement are comprehensive, informative and valued by parents. There are very effective arrangements for carrying out pupils' annual reviews. Throughout the year staff compile a photo and DVD diary which acts as an excellent record of a pupil's progress and achievement.

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

There are highly effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing and very extensive working links with a range of specialist services that provide guidance and support.

All pupils benefit greatly from an individual health care plan, devised by the school nurses in partnership with the teaching staff, parents and carers. Pupils also have a range of personalised programmes that include support with mobility and sensory development from specialist teachers. The educational psychologist monitors all annual reviews and identifies additional support for pupils with particular difficulties. A wide range of therapies including physiotherapy and music therapy are integrated very effectively into pupils' learning activities.

Pupils receive exemplary individual support and guidance from staff. A key worker is allocated to each pupil and, as a result, pupils receive very effective personalised care and learning programmes. Pupils have access to an appropriate personal and social education programme including sex and relationship education, where appropriate.

The school has highly effective procedures for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils' additional learning needs. Individual education plans identify appropriate learning targets which are displayed prominently and used carefully by all staff, and are reviewed regularly. The plans link very well to the development of pupils' personal skills. All staff work together very effectively to set, monitor and evaluate these individual targets.

The school places a very strong emphasis on supporting parents and carers which has a very positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. Parents and carers receive a wide range of valuable information and guidance from the school. This includes training from the school nurses, who work closely with the visiting paediatrician, on how to manage the physical care of their children. The overall support for parents and carers and the impact of this work are outstanding.

Pupils' personal development is promoted very well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Staff make comprehensive risk assessments that are updated regularly. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school has an inclusive and supportive ethos where all pupils are treated with respect and dignity. All pupils have equal access to all aspects of the school's provision. The school considers pupils' needs, abilities and backgrounds carefully to

ensure access to the curriculum. Staff promote diversity and equal opportunities well within the curriculum and in wider school activities.

The school provides a positive, caring and welcoming environment with a wide enough range of suitable resources to meet the needs of learners.

The school buildings are well maintained. The older adapted and modified classroom areas and the very good accommodation and facilities in the new building provide a good learning environment.

Displays across the school are attractive and include accessible, tactile, visual and auditory objects of reference. The outdoor provision, although constrained, provides good areas for learning and recreation.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
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### **Leadership: Excellent**

The headteacher and other managers have established a very clear vision for the school which is shared by all staff. There are comprehensive policies and plans which focus very well on meeting the complex needs of the pupils.

Governors know their school very well. All governors have a curriculum responsibility and visit classes as part of this role. They attend courses in the school with the education staff. Governors are not only supportive but also challenging and the chair of governors regularly discusses performance management data with the headteacher.

Senior managers have developed a very strong inclusive team ethos among school staff and others who work with the school on a regular basis. The school has successfully encouraged teachers to take a collective responsibility for leadership by making sure that every teacher has a leadership role within the classroom teams.

Staff performance is very carefully and regularly monitored and evaluated, through an inclusive performance management system, to ensure that the school improvement process is on-going and rigorous. All staff feel valued and contribute effectively to school planning and improvement.

Curriculum leaders work very well across the school to support and challenge colleagues. The school has developed exemplary procedures for tracking and recording the achievements of the pupils. This information is used effectively to further enhance the learning experiences available to all pupils and ensure that high standards of achievement are maintained.

The school meets local and national priorities very well and ensures that these are tailored to meet the needs of the pupils.

The headteacher has taken a sector leading role in setting up and managing the funding for a graduate diploma course for staff who teach pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. He wrote the specification for a specialist course which

was then discussed and developed through a professional network. He also led working groups made up of senior staff from a number of special schools to develop the content and teaching approaches for the course. Ysgol Crug Glas manages the finance, administration and library for the course. Attendance on the course has had a positive impact on teachers' practice.

### **Improving quality: Excellent**

The process of self-evaluation is exceptional and is very firmly embedded in the school. It is based on first-hand evidence collected through a range of appropriate strategies. As a result, managers have an honest and accurate view of the school and have produced a school improvement plan of very high quality.

All staff contribute fully and effectively to the process. Managers, staff, leaders and governors reflect on their own practice and use the outcomes systematically to set priorities for future development. The school seeks and values the views of parents and carers and a wide range of other stakeholders.

The school has very effective systems in place for managing performance. There is systematic classroom observation by senior managers. Results from performance management are used very well to identify further areas for development and training for school staff, governors and others working with the school. The culture of professional development is very strong. Staff have access to a wide range of appropriate courses.

There are exceptional links with other schools to ensure that all pupils benefit from a wide range of learning experiences and that staff can develop their skills. Teachers benefit from the opportunity to observe each other within the school and also within the network of local schools. Links are well established with schools in other European countries, such as Norway and Germany, to share information about effective strategies for pupils who have complex needs.

The school continuously develops its own data to inform school improvement and the headteacher is involved in the development of a national data set for special schools.

The school has made very good progress in addressing the recommendations of the last inspection.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The school has works very closely with a wide range of valuable partners both locally and further afield.

Other local school staff and pupils attend Ysgol Crug Glas regularly to take part in lessons and learning experiences with the staff and pupils of the school. This supports the sharing of good practice within and beyond the school so that staff can place their work in a broader context. Pupils have the opportunity to meet and mix with other children and pupils from local schools gain a greater understanding of disability issues.

There are very strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies and community groups which play an important part in the life of the pupils, such as the local health trust. Consultants from the local health trust hold clinics at the school on a regular basis. A dentist provides prompt treatment for pupils in pupils' familiar school surroundings.

Unlocking the Potential of Special Schools funding has been used in a dynamic and innovative way. Staff from Ysgol Crug Glas coach mainstream staff and model good practice. The project also works on much needed ways of measuring progress for pupils with multiple or severe and complex learning difficulties.

The partnership between the school and parents and carers is exemplary. Parents and carers are fully involved in decisions about their child's education. Staff listen carefully to what parents tell them about what their children can do well, their likes and dislikes and their behaviour. This valuable information is used carefully by all staff to help them meet pupils' needs. Fundraising by parents has led to significant improvements to the school buildings and other resources.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has an appropriate range of experienced, specialist teachers and other staff who are deployed well and support pupils very effectively.

Staff receive many appropriate professional development opportunities as well as appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. This makes sure that staff can be effective and that the pupils are provided with a wide variety of personal and learning experiences.

School resources are of good quality and are well matched to the interests and abilities of the pupils.

The school's financial management is efficient and effective. Managers ensure that resources support and improve the learning environment. There are well-developed procedures to ensure that expenditure is allocated effectively to meet identified priorities. The monitoring of expenditure is rigorous and the governing body provides effective scrutiny.

The school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-one parents responded to the questionnaire and all agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the school, that their child likes the school and was helped to settle in well. Almost all strongly agreed that the teaching is good, that their child makes progress and is safe in school, and that pupils behave well. All agreed or agreed strongly that staff treat pupils with respect, expect them to take on more responsibility and encourage them to be healthy and take regular exercise, where appropriate. All thought that pupils receive good support and are encouraged to be more mature. They all felt comfortable with approaching the school. A very small minority were unsure of the complaints procedure. Additional comments were highly complementary about the dedication of the staff, their compassion and how well the school supports parents and carers.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Claire Yardley HMI	Reporting Inspector
Meinir Rees HMI	Team Inspector
Mike Munting HMI	Team Inspector
Mike Farrell AI	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Ian Elliott	Peer Inspector
Phil Martin	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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## 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