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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Ger y Llan Voluntary Controlled Primary School
St David's Road
Letterston
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 5SL**

Date of inspection: June 2012

by

Dorothy Morris

for

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

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

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

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Context

Ysgol Ger y Llan is a Church in Wales voluntary controlled primary school. The school is situated in the village of Letterston between Haverfordwest and Fishguard in Pembrokeshire. In January 2011, Ysgol Mathry, also a voluntary controlled primary school, was amalgamated with the school and a few additional pupils were received.

Most of the pupils who attend the school live in the village and the surrounding rural areas. The school describes the area as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure that is higher than the local authority and national averages.

The school caters for pupils between three and eleven years of age. There are 147 pupils on the school's roll, including eleven children of nursery age who attend on a part-time basis.

The school has identified 27% of pupils as having additional learning needs; a figure that is higher than the local authority and national averages. No pupil holds a statement for special educational needs.

Sixteen per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken. The school's language policy notes that Welsh is the main medium of teaching in the foundation phase. In key stage 2, pupils are taught through the medium of English and Welsh but more emphasis is placed on Welsh. There are currently no pupils of ethnic minority background at the school.

Since the previous inspection in June 2006, the school has experienced changes in leadership and amongst the teaching staff. The school transferred to a new building on the same site in April 2012.

The current headteacher has been in post since May 2011.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Ger y Llan in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3444 per pupil. The maximum budget per pupil in Pembrokeshire primary schools is £5323 and the minimum is £3000. Ysgol Ger y Llan has the 38th highest budget per pupil of the 61 primary schools in Pembrokeshire.

Summary

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate.

The strengths include:

- most pupils make appropriate progress from their starting point during their period at the school;
- the standard of teaching is good overall;
- pupils behave very well, are courteous and have good attitudes to learning; and
- the school is a caring community with a welcoming ethos.

However:

- the results of pupils' assessments at the end of both key stages fluctuate in comparison with those of the family of similar schools;
- the achievement of the most able pupils is uneven and is below that of the family of similar schools in many subjects;
- pupils' skills in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh are not always sufficiently secure; and
- curriculum planning does not ensure consistent progression in the learning.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the new headteacher sets a clear strategic direction for the school with a strong focus on improving standards;
- all staff collaborate well and implement new initiatives which promote pupils' educational development and wellbeing successfully;
- the improvement plan is clearly linked to the self-evaluation process and includes appropriate areas to receive attention;
- the new strategies to improve standards in literacy are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement; and
- there is successful collaboration with the governing body, parents and other partners.

Recommendations

In order to develop, the school needs to:

- R1 strengthen pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills in Welsh;
- R2 build on the improvements in boys' standard of work generally, and extend the achievement of the most able pupils at the end of both key stages;
- R3 strengthen mid-term planning in key stage 2, and promote consistent progress in learning skills throughout the school;
- R4 strengthen the development plan by making greater use of quantifiable targets in order to measure progress; and
- R5 develop further the procedures for levelling and standardising pupils' work, and ensure that marking assists pupils to improve their standard of work.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan in order to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

During their time at the school, most pupils make appropriate progress in their learning. They work together productively and respond positively to the tasks presented to them.

Throughout the classes, nearly all pupils listen well. A minority speak confidently about their work, expressing themselves clearly and accurately in Welsh. Most communicate freely in a variety of situations but overall, offer only short responses when answering questions and expressing an opinion.

In both key stages, the majority of pupils make consistent progress in their reading skills in Welsh. In the foundation phase, the majority of pupils develop a range of suitable reading strategies and use them purposefully to improve their accuracy and expression. In key stage 2, most pupils read competently with a minority reading meaningfully and with good expression. Overall, pupils do not read with sufficient fluency and their ability to discuss the contents of their books is underdeveloped.

Throughout the school, most pupils use their Welsh writing skills effectively for different purposes. Many pupils in the foundation phase write independently, and begin to vary their sentences and use a broader vocabulary. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils write with increasing fluency and use paragraphs and punctuation accurately. Nevertheless, a minority of pupils' grasp of correct language patterns is

not sufficiently secure. Pupils generally do not write sufficiently at length across the curriculum.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils' English skills are developing well. They discuss effectively, read meaningfully on the whole, and generally write accurately.

Throughout the school, most pupils make appropriate use of their information and communications technology skills, and their numeracy skills, in different tasks. Nevertheless, they do not develop them progressively in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Pupils' ability to work more independently develops unevenly across the classes.

In teachers' assessments over a period of four years, the percentage of seven year old pupils who achieve the core subject indicator (level 2 in a combination of the results in Welsh, mathematics and science) is higher than the averages for the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales in two of the four years. The percentage of pupils attaining level 2 in the subjects separately fluctuates, with results in Welsh demonstrating a significant downward turn.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils at 11 years of age who achieve the core subject indicator (level 4 in a combination of the results in English or Welsh, mathematics and science) is higher than the averages for the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales in two of the last four years. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English and science separately compares favourably with similar schools in most years. It fluctuates in Welsh and mathematics.

When compared with similar schools across Wales based on the percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the school's achievement in the core subject indicator over four years varies between the highest 25% and the lowest 25% at the end of both key stages.

The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels, namely level 3 in the foundation phase and level 5 in key stage 2, is uneven and is below the average for the family of similar schools in many subjects. Pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress and achieve the targets set for them. Although there are some variations, pupils entitled to receive free school meals do not achieve as well as their peers.

There is no consistent pattern in the difference between the results for boys and girls at the end of the key stages although there are clear differences in some years. In the foundation phase statutory assessments in 2011 for example, girls achieve much better than boys in their literacy skills. Across the school, a minority of boys' progress generally has been uneven in comparison with girls. However, a review of pupils' current work and of more recent class assessments shows progress in most pupils' reading, spelling and mathematics skills.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils understand the features of healthy eating and its effect on the body. They understand the importance of fitness and exercising the body and undertake a range of different activities regularly.

During discussions, pupils state that they are happy at the school and enjoy their learning. Their behaviour during lessons and play times is very good and they are courteous to each other and towards adults.

Most pupils are actively involved in school life and have regular opportunities to shoulder responsibilities. The school council and eco committee contribute appropriately towards decisions on a range of issues but their roles are not fully developed.

In comparison with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' attendance is in the highest 50% in most years. The school's recent efforts to improve attendance are succeeding. The current attendance percentage is over 95%, which is higher than the national average.

Pupils contribute effectively and successfully to the local area and the wider community and take part enthusiastically in a range of activities

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

The school provides a range of learning experiences that gain the interest of most pupils and meets their needs. The principles of the foundation phase have been established and activities are planned in detail across the six areas of learning. In key stage 2, mid-term planning does not always ensure consistency across the subjects or promote sufficient continuity and progression in the learning. Lessons are planned in detail. Nevertheless, activities do not consistently offer the most able pupils sufficient challenge.

The development of a skills framework for planning the curriculum is a positive feature, but the process is not fully established throughout the school. Opportunities for pupils to write at length, apply their numeracy skills and use information and communications technology in different contexts are more uneven. In key stage 2, the provision to develop pupils' speaking and reading skills in English across the curriculum is good. The provision to promote pupils' independent learning skills is not consistently established across the classes.

There is appropriate provision for the Welsh language. Positive attitudes are nurtured, but the planning does not always ensure consistent progression in skills throughout the school. There are effective opportunities for pupils to learn about their area and about the history and culture of Wales. The constructive use of visits and of the contribution of visitors enriches pupils' experiences.

The curriculum, links with a school in Sweden, cultural activities and Fairtrade initiatives are used appropriately to enable pupils to learn about sustainability and global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and make effective use of a range of teaching strategies and appropriate resources to develop the learning. The effective collaboration between teaching and support staff enhances the learning experiences provided.

In most lessons where teaching is effective, the objectives and success criteria are shared with pupils, there is a clear focus on re-enforcing skills, incisive questioning and purposeful opportunities for pupils to work in discussion pairs and in small

groups. In the very few lessons where teaching is less effective, tasks are not challenging enough to extend pupils' learning, especially the most able pupils, and the organisation of free-choice activities do not always ensure consistent learning.

The school has suitable arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress. There is effective use of the data produced to monitor pupils' progress and to structure the additional support programmes provided throughout the school. Procedures for levelling and standardising pupils' work across the school have not developed fully to assist teachers assess pupils' achievement accurately and consistently.

Assessment for learning strategies are developing across the school and are beginning to have a positive impact on standards particularly in upper key stage 2. Pupils receive effective feedback during lessons. Nevertheless, teachers' written comments do not always assist pupils to improve the quality of their work.

Reports to parents meet statutory requirements and offer clear information on their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community and there are effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing. A wide range of initiatives are promoted that encourage healthy eating and regular physical exercise.

Provision for personal and social education has a positive effect on pupils' development. The constructive working relationship with external agencies and specialist services support pupils and staff effectively.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. There is clear guidance for all members of staff who are aware of the requirements.

The school uses appropriate processes to identify and monitor the progress of pupils with additional learning needs, including the most able pupils. The individual educational plans are of good quality and are regularly reviewed.

The school is developing a range of appropriate intervention programmes that are moving the learning forward. They include well focussed sessions to strengthen groups of pupils' basic literacy and mathematics skills. The nurture group makes a very effective contribution to the development of pupils who have more specific emotional and social needs.

Learning environment: Good

The school's caring and inclusive ethos promotes equal opportunities for all pupils to take advantage of the full range of educational provision. The school succeeds in developing pupils' awareness of equality and diversity effectively. Much emphasis is placed on working together and respecting the contributions of others.

There are sufficient resources of good quality to present the curriculum. The new building offers a range of classrooms and learning facilities of a high standard. They are used fully by staff and pupils. Classrooms are colourful with appropriate displays of pupils' work that support the learning. The school is in the process of developing the outdoor site as a purposeful learning resource.

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

The headteacher's high expectations have a positive influence on the school's development. She identifies suitable development priorities and offers the school sound strategic direction which is succeeding in raising standards and improving the quality of the educational provision in many areas. Her clear vision has been shared effectively with pupils, parents, governors and staff. All staff work together well as a team and demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring further improvements. Following a period of significant change, the headteacher's contribution to the process of creating a stable learning environment for staff and pupils has been of a high standard.

Through the headteacher's reports, monitoring visits and discussions with co-ordinators and the school council, the governing body has a secure knowledge of the school's educational provision and the challenges it faces. Members are very supportive of the school and undertake their statutory responsibilities effectively. They make regular use of data to monitor the school's performance and to plan collaboratively to address areas that need improvement.

Suitable attention is paid to national and local priorities. The school has adopted the principles and some processes of the School Effectiveness Framework appropriately, the philosophy of the foundation phase is established and strategies for developing literacy skills are promoted effectively.

Improving quality: Good

The headteacher and staff have an accurate understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. There is effective use of a range of sources to evaluate the school's performance, including analysing a wide range of data, lesson observations, a scrutiny of samples of pupils' work and evaluating different aspects of areas of learning. The views of pupils, parents, staff, governors and the local authority are considered fully. The self-evaluation report, which emanates from the outcomes of this process, provides a balanced view of the school's strengths and prioritises appropriate areas for improvement.

The school development plan includes appropriate areas to improve pupils' standards. A few of the targets however, are not specific enough and as a result it is not always easy to measure progress. In a short period of time, the school has succeeded in implementing strategies that are having a positive effect on improving literacy standards, raising attendance levels and developing assessment for learning strategies.

All staff are supported well by continuous professional development processes. They collaborate well in professional learning communities within the school such as the initiative to extend pupils' speaking skills. In addition, the links with other schools to observe and share good practice are extending teachers' knowledge and developing their skills effectively.

Partnership working: Good

The effective collaboration with a range of strategic partners, which include parents, the community, the church and a range of organisations, has a beneficial effect on pupils' education, wellbeing and development.

There are very positive links with parents and the school provides suitable opportunities for them to receive information about their children's progress and development. The productive use of parent questionnaires and the responses contribute to future planning. The successful initiative to improve attendance is an example of effective collaboration.

Partnerships with the community are good and pupils benefit from the contribution of local organisations. The planning to promote links with business and the focus on entrepreneurship is at an early stage of development.

Collaboration with the local cluster of schools contributes effectively towards developing the provision and moderating pupils' work. There are good curricular links, and transfer procedures of a high quality with the secondary school. Close links with the local authority contribute towards ensuring further improvements in the provision.

Resource management: Adequate

There are sufficient qualified staff to teach the curriculum appropriately. The school has an established procedure of performance management which offers staff good opportunities for continuous professional development. The school satisfies statutory requirements relating to teachers' workload. Support staff are deployed effectively across the school and there is good use of individual skills.

The new building offers an attractive and secure learning environment. Overall, there is a sufficient range and supply of resources which are used effectively to support the teaching and learning.

The headteacher, the governing body finance committee and officers of the local authority, work together effectively to manage the school's budget. Appropriate priority is given to ensuring a sufficient supply of staff and to supporting the priorities identified in the school development plan.

Considering pupils' outcomes, aspects of curricular planning and that some initiatives are continuing to develop, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the foundation phase, the percentage of seven year old pupils achieving the core subject indicator (level 2 in a combination of the core subjects namely Welsh, mathematics and science) is higher than the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales in two of the last four years. The percentage of pupils attaining level 2 in Welsh, mathematics and science separately has been uneven.

Mathematics results are higher than comparators in most years. Results in science are higher in two years, with results in Welsh similar to or lower and showing a downward trend. Results in 2011 were affected significantly by the high number of pupils, 63%, with additional learning needs in year 2.

In key stage 2, results for pupils at 11 years of age in the core subject indicator (level 4 in a combination of the core subjects namely English or Welsh, mathematics and science) is higher than the averages for the family of similar schools and those of the local authority and Wales in two of the last four years. In 2011, there was a fall in the results. Fifty-five per cent of pupils in year 6 were identified as having additional learning needs. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English and science as separate subjects has been higher than comparators in three of the last four years. It is higher than or similar in Welsh. In mathematics, it is higher in two out of four years.

In comparison with similar schools across Wales in respect of the percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, pupils' results in the core subject indicator over four years vary between the highest 25% and the lowest 25% at the end of both key stages. In key stage 2, pupils' results place the school in the highest 25% in two of the four years.

The percentage of pupils who attain level 3 in the foundation phase is uneven. In mathematics and science, it is higher than the averages for the family of similar schools and of the local authority and Wales in two of the last four years. In Welsh, it is lower. The percentage of pupils who achieve level 5 in key stage 2 is uneven in comparison with comparators in mathematics and science. In English and Welsh, it is lower in three of the last four years.

In both key stages, there is no consistent pattern in the difference between the results of boys and girls, although there are clear differences in some years. In the foundation phase assessments in 2010 and 2011, there is a gap, with girls' achieving much better than boys in literacy skills, especially in speaking and reading skills. Outcomes in mathematics and science in 2011 also demonstrate some disparity in performance.

In teachers' assessments at the end of the foundation phase, the percentage that attains the expected level in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh is uneven. It shows a fall in comparison with the averages for the local authority and Wales over the last two years and is significantly lower than the averages for the family of similar schools. In key stage 2, results in speaking and reading Welsh are uneven, but they are similar to or higher than the family of similar schools in writing in most years. In English, results in speaking, reading and writing are similar to or higher than comparators in most years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Parents completed 39 questionnaires. They state that they are happy with the school and that their children like the school and feel safe there. They are of the opinion that pupils' behaviour is good, with almost all saying that pupils are respected and treated fairly. Nearly all are of the opinion that the teaching is good and that teachers expect their children to work hard. Nearly all believe that their children are making appropriate progress. They believe that the homework builds well on what their children learn in school. They say that the school provides additional support for pupils with any specific individual needs. They are of the opinion that the school prepares their children well for the next stage in their education. Their children are encouraged to be healthy and to undertake regular physical exercise. Many state that they receive regular information on their children's progress and nearly all feel comfortable to discuss any matter with the school. They say that they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints. Many are of the opinion that the school offers a good variety of activities. All parents are of the opinion that the school is well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Seventy-seven pupils completed the questionnaire. Nearly all state that they feel safe at school and know who to talk to if they are worried about anything. They say that the school deals with bullying well. Nearly all state that they are taught to be healthy and that there are many opportunities for them to undertake regular physical exercise. They are of the opinion that they are doing well in school and that teachers help them to learn and make progress. They feel that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school, and that they have enough books and equipment to undertake their work. Many believe that other pupils behave well during lessons, play time and the lunch break.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Brinley Jones	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Sarah T Evans	Peer Inspector
Elin Evans	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.