



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

**Tŷ Gwyn School
Vincent Road
Ely
Cardiff
CF5 5AQ**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

Mr Glyn Griffiths

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

Tŷ Gwyn School is a local authority day special school located in the Ely area of Cardiff, catering for up to 150 children and young people aged 3 – 19 years who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many pupils are also on the autistic spectrum and present severe challenging behaviour.

The school's catchment area comprises the City & County of Cardiff and the surrounding local authorities in South East Wales. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds.

Currently there are 120 pupils on roll. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or are in the process of having their needs assessed. Thirty two per cent of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. This is higher than the all-Wales average of 20%. About a half of the pupils come from homes where English is not the predominant language. There are no pupils from a Welsh speaking home.

The school teaches all the National Curriculum subjects. The school's curriculum is aimed at providing a meaningful, relevant and motivating curriculum to pupils, meeting their specific needs and furthering their all round development

Pupils in key stage 4 and post 16 have access to accredited courses together with work experience and college link courses.

The school has sensory and touch therapy rooms, soft play area, indoor and outdoor sensory gardens, as well as specialist rooms for art and ceramics, food technology and music.

The head teacher took up post in September 2005. The present senior leadership team is comprised of the headteacher, the deputy head teacher, an assistant head teacher, a higher level teaching assistant and the office manager. The head teacher was in post at the time of the last inspection.

Since the last inspection in May 2006 the school was relocated into a new purpose built building, in September 2010.

The 2011-2012 individual school budget per pupil for Tŷ Gwyn School is £24238 which compares to a national average of £17628 for all special schools in Wales.

Summary

The school's current performance	Excellent
The school's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

Tŷ Gwyn School is an excellent school because:

- pupils achieve excellent standards across all areas of the school;
- staff identify and build successfully on pupils' very small steps of learning;
- there is excellent provision to promote pupils' health and wellbeing;
- the school has good systems for tracking and analysing information about pupils' progress;
- care, support and guidance offered to the pupils is of a very high standard;
- the school offers excellent support to parents and carers;
- the school shares its good practice with a range of partners, and
- staff know the pupils well and understand how to respond and plan to meet their complex and wide ranging needs.

Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because:

- the headteacher, supported by his senior leadership team, has a very clear vision for the development of the school which is shared by all the staff;
- the school continually develops the very highly effective use of multimedia and information and communications technology across the school to ensure high standards in pupils' communication skills;
- there is a very well developed culture of self evaluation that leads to clear plans for school improvement;
- staff performance is managed very effectively, and
- the school makes highly effective use of detailed data to identify needs and assess pupils' progress across a diverse range of individual needs.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and governors of Tŷ Gwyn School should:

R1 Further develop the role of the governing body in formally recording and monitoring development across the school; and

R2 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 practices identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

Nearly all pupils at Tŷ Gwyn School achieve very well.

In most lessons, and over a period of time, nearly all pupils make very good progress in their learning and achieve very good standards in relation to their abilities and personal targets.

It is not appropriate to compare standards pupils achieve at the school with national averages or to analyse trends in performance over time because of the very specific nature of their special educational needs.

There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, those pupils in receipt of free school meals, those who are looked after by a local authority, or those from ethnic minority groups.

The school sets specific targets for each pupil and nearly all achieve these targets within a given time period. The targets are shared with all parents and with the more able pupils where appropriate. In these instances the parents and pupils play an active part in identifying and planning suitable routes for learning.

Due to the complex needs of the pupils, learning is measured and recorded against small steps of progress. Nearly all pupils perform very well on tasks and make good or very good progress within their ability range, developing a range of skills, knowledge and understanding. They are developing a range of communication skills, with listening and focused concentration being particular strengths. They learn to make appropriate eye contact and or use parts of their body to make choices. The very few more able pupils are developing early literacy skills successfully. Pupils' use of numeracy is good.

Those pupils who use language to communicate make very good progress in the key skills of speaking and listening.

Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders communicate their needs very effectively using a visual picture exchange vocabulary as well as information and communications technology.

Most pupils of all abilities make highly effective use of information and communication technology and multimedia resources to support their communication. Achievement and progress, in particular by pupils who have severe speech and communication difficulties, is an outstanding feature.

All pupils are disapplied from the teaching of Welsh. However in relation to their individual needs most pupils make adequate progress in incidental Welsh and a small minority make good progress.

Nearly all pupils in key stage 4 make very good progress in relation to using key skills of communication in their work experience and activities within the community. Standards achieved are varied according to pupils' ability levels but nearly all show an increasing use and confidence in applying basic skills to everyday real life situations such as shopping and work experience.

Pupils in key stage 4 and Post 16 have access to aspects of accredited courses which are adapted to meet their ability and needs. These achievements help them to gain key life skills to prepare them for life effectively after Tŷ Gwyn School. The standard of work and the application of personal skills within vocational opportunities are a notable feature. Pupils work very well with others to prepare and sell food and drinks in the school café and communicate well with customers, using technological aids.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy their lessons and the majority attend school regularly. The attendance of pupils with significant health needs has improved since health support is provided in the school. Parents and carers recognise that their children's needs are looked after very well and that their children feel safe and benefit from their time at school.

Almost all pupils are aware of the need to eat a healthy diet and the value of exercise in daily life. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe in the school environment.

Most pupils understand and respond to instructions and are encouraged to show their likes and dislikes. They show respect, listen very carefully to staff, learn to take turns and are very keen to join in the activities planned for them. The pupils respond enthusiastically to the positive verbal and visually recorded feedback that they receive from staff.

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

Nearly all pupils settle into classes quickly and engage confidently with their activities. Pupils with challenging behaviour learn to co-operate well with others, improve their self-control and show an increasing awareness of the needs of others.

Pupils take part enthusiastically in a range of school activities and with other activities within the community.

Those pupils who are members of the school council and other committees show a good awareness of decision making and have contributed to the design of the hydrotherapy pool.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Excellent

Learning experiences: Excellent

The school has a well planned and well managed curriculum in place, with learning experiences that are well matched to the needs of pupils.

All pupils have good opportunities to develop their communication skills, using appropriate signing and augmented systems where necessary. Numeracy and information and communication technology skills are also developed well, in line with levels of ability and sensory functioning.

In addition, some pupils with complex communication difficulties require innovative approaches to enable access and progression. The provision for information and communications technology in general, and the role of the Assistive Technology Centre in particular, is sector leading.

Although all pupils are formally disapplied from studying Welsh, provision for developing skills in literacy, which includes basic, incidental Welsh, is also very good. Wales and its cultural context feature prominently within teachers' planning and are evident across a range of learning experiences.

Planning and provision for the development of skills within the 14-19 Learning Pathways is good and developing well with access to accreditation as appropriate.

The school provides a good range of clubs to enhance and extend learning and good use is made of off-site visits and trips.

The school has achieved Eco Schools status, and raising awareness and understanding of sustainable development is promoted effectively.

Different cultures and traditions are actively celebrated and international links strengthen pupils' experiences and understanding of global citizenship.

Teaching: Excellent

Staff demonstrate a very good knowledge of pupils' needs and their individual targets which enables them to focus their support effectively. Relationships and interactions between staff and pupils are very good. All staff have high expectations of the pupils.

Lessons are well planned with a very good range of adapted activities and teachers apply a wide range of strategies consistently in lessons. They successfully motivate pupils to participate to the best of their ability, and this enables them to develop increasing independence and improve.

Nearly all teachers make highly effective use of information technology and multimedia resources to enhance and enrich the quality of teaching.

Assessment procedures for tracking, analysing and recording information of pupil's progress are very good. This enables the school to provide well targeted support for all pupils.

End of year reports to parents meet statutory requirements. They are clearly presented and provide useful information on how their child is progressing.

Staff use video evidence well to assess and recognise achievement and plan for further learning and progress. These are having a positive impact on the standards achieved by all pupils.

At the end of each day teachers successfully involve pupils in reflecting on what they have learned and how they progressed against their targets. Pupils' achievement is regularly recorded in the home-school diaries and provides parents and carers with continuity in understanding what their child is achieving and how they can help.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school is a caring community where everyone feels valued. Arrangements for pupils' wellbeing, care and guidance are very strong features of the school's work. The benefits of healthy living are promoted very well across the curriculum and in a range of extra-curricular activities.

The school is committed to ensuring that the pupils are given opportunities to be as active and healthy as possible. The partnership of home and other stakeholders with the school is fundamental to its successful implementation.

The promotion of pupil's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is highly effective. Pupils have access to a very good personal and social education programme including sex and relationship education, where appropriate. These learning experiences promote pupils' personal development very well.

The school uses a wide range of support services and expertise to enhance curriculum provision and extend and reinforce the learning experiences of the pupils. The school provides a wide range of therapies such as physiotherapy and music therapy and these contribute greatly toward improving standards in wellbeing and increasing pupil participation. The integrated nature of a range of support services based at, or using the school, is a strength.

The school has effective procedures for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils' additional learning needs and behaviour. Annual reviews meet statutory requirements. Individual education plans identify appropriate learning targets which more able pupils are involved in setting.

Staff work together very effectively to set, monitor and evaluate these targets which are displayed prominently in classes. Learning support assistants provide pupils with outstanding support in and outside the classroom.

The very effective use of augmentative communication aids has enabled pupils to take a more active role in activities such as making decisions within the school council and other committees. This is a notable feature of the school.

The school places a very strong emphasis on supporting parents and carers which has a very positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. This is a strength of the school.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school has a very positive and supportive ethos which is promoted by staff and the governing body. It is a well ordered community providing a caring and welcoming environment.

There is equal access to the curriculum and the wide range of extra-curricular activities, off-site visits and educational trips.

The school effectively supports a diverse, multicultural community and pupils have good opportunities to engage positively in appropriate and relevant multicultural learning.

The school provides an exceptional learning environment with spacious, modern and well planned accommodation. There is a very good range of specialist areas that are made available for use by specialist services.

Classrooms are well organised with very good access to the outdoors areas which are spacious and designed specifically to meet the needs of pupils.

The wide range of displays in place, celebrate the work of the school, its activities and achievements.

Resources are of very good quality and are well matched to pupils' needs.

Throughout, this is a modern, well maintained and well managed provision.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the development of the school that is shared by all the staff. They have a comprehensive understanding of whole school and individual pupil needs. Senior leaders have established very high expectations, within a positive and inclusive school ethos, to improve pupil outcomes and the quality of provision.

The impact of leadership leads to the establishment of high standards. Leaders and managers make very effective use of data to set specific targets for strategic planning and improvement.

Comprehensive policies and plans are in place and these clearly focus on meeting the very complex and challenging needs of pupils.

Job descriptions are clear and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Well-planned staff meetings and training provide effective opportunities to discuss pupil and whole school progress, acquire more specialist skills and reflect and share the most effective practice.

Governors know their school very well and fulfil their statutory duties. They have specific areas of responsibilities and report back to the full governing body. They are ready to enhance their knowledge through attending courses organised by school staff.

Governors also provide good support and helpful challenge to the school and they regularly discuss performance management data with the headteacher. However the governors recognise the need to further formalise aspects of their work.

The school meets national and local priorities very well and innovatively implements these to meet pupils' needs.

Improving quality: Excellent

The process of self-evaluation is firmly embedded and involves seeking the views of key stakeholders through a range of very well-established procedures.

Staff contribute effectively to this process and senior leaders ensure that full account is taken of local and national priorities.

The self-evaluation report clearly identifies and prioritises areas for securing improvement, and this links clearly with the school improvement plan. However, the self-evaluation report itself is, in a few places, descriptive rather than evaluative.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of both pupil and whole-school performance, based on a wide range of first hand evidence.

The systems for managing staff performance are very well-structured. Classroom observations by senior leaders are used effectively to gain a thorough understanding of standards and the quality of teaching. Results from performance management are used very effectively 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 and all staff have access to a wide range of relevant courses.

There are highly effective networks of professional practice within and beyond the school and they are suitably focussed on improving the quality of pupils' outcomes and teaching.

The school has successfully addressed the recommendations of the last inspection.

Partnership working: Excellent

There are a wide range of well-established strategic partnerships with other schools, support agencies and with the local community. These greatly enhance the range of experiences, resources and support provided to the learners.

The partnership between the school and parents and carers is excellent. Parents and carers are fully involved in decisions about their child's education and they are fully informed about their child's progress and achievements through comprehensive reports and video evidence. The valuable partnership working between home and school greatly enhances the provision and improves pupils' outcomes. The work of the school's family centre in providing advice and guidance to parents is excellent. Support available at the centre is formally evaluated and indicates a direct impact on standards of pupils' learning across school and home. This partnership is sector leading.

The school's partnerships contribute very well towards joint quality assurance to improve learners' outcomes and wellbeing.

The school ensures that joint planning with other providers enhances the quality of provision for pupils. The use of shared resources with partner schools ensures access to a wider range of facilities.

The school's outreach service is valued by partner schools. Staff at Tŷ Gwyn provide support and training to mainstream staff and this is formally evaluated by the local authority.

Resource management: Excellent

The school has a highly effective team of experienced, specialist teachers and support staff who are managed very well and deployed effectively.

All staff access well-planned continuing professional development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge; this ensures that they are effective in providing pupils with a wide variety of personalised learning experiences.

Teachers make good use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and this contributes towards ensuring high standards of teaching as well as raising pupils' standards of achievement.

The school has a very good range of high quality resources that are used to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Staff use resources skilfully to support and improve the learning and wellbeing of all pupils.

All aspects of financial management are rigorously monitored through very well-established processes that include a local authority officer, senior administrator and the headteacher. Spending is carefully linked to priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

Taking account of the standards attained by pupils, the high quality teaching, care and support and highly effective management the school provides excellent value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty nine parents responded to the questionnaires and nearly all agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the school and that it is well run. They all feel that their child likes school, is encouraged to be healthy and feels safe there. All parents state that pupils behave well and that staff treat children fairly and with respect. Nearly all parents feel that teaching is good and that their child is making good progress. Many parents feel that the school helps their child to move on to the next school, college or work but a few disagree. Most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem and understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. All parents feel that the school is well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Due to the complex needs of the pupils, ten pupils took part in the questionnaire, responding through a pictorial card exchange system which was recorded by the school.

Their responses indicated that they all feel safe at school and that the school helps them to be healthy. They feel that they are doing well at school and that they have the right equipment available to them. They feel that pupils behave well at the school.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Glyn Griffiths	Reporting Inspector
Phillip Bowker	Team Inspector
Ian Elliot	Team Inspector
Iorylle Aubrey	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Lesley Bush	Peer Inspector
Diane Stones	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 ALN terms

ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ALN: additional learning needs

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

ATR: additional teacher resource

BESD, ESBD or SEBD: Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

CoP: Code of Practice

HI: hearing impairment

MSI: multi-sensory impairment

PMLD: profound and multiple learning difficulties

SpLD: specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

VI: visual impairment