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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Craig y Nos School
Clyne Common
Bishopston
Swansea
SA3 3JB**

Date of inspection: July 2011

by

**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 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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Context

Craig y Nos School is an independent primary school for boys and girls aged between two years and 11 years of age. It is situated in a rural setting on the south west edge of Clyne Common, near the village of Murton, about five miles from the centre of Swansea. The school was founded in 1920 and moved to its current site in 1983. It became a limited company in 1992.

The aim of the school as set out in its prospectus is to provide 'a well-disciplined framework, within which a child can obtain a broad and liberal education within a caring and friendly environment'.

There are 83 pupils on roll, including 18 in the nursery and reception classes. Most pupils live in the areas of west Swansea and Gower. Class sizes currently vary from seven to 17 pupils.

English is the first language of all but two pupils. One pupil speaks Welsh as a first language. About 7% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

The school reports that none of its pupils is socially disadvantaged. About 8% receive additional learning support and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

There is no selective assessment or formal assessment test to determine admission to the school. The school accepts pupils if a space is available in their year group and where the school believes it can fulfil the child's particular needs.

Most pupils transfer at 11 to local comprehensive schools or to independent schools in Swansea and Llanelli.

The proprietor is also the headteacher of the school. The school was last inspected in January 2006.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- pupils achieve good standards in national curriculum assessments year on year;
- pupils develop their speaking and listening skills very well;
- pupils develop good and sometimes very good skills in reading and writing in English by the end of key stage 2;
- pupils with additional learning needs make particularly good progress from their starting points; and
- pupils develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to access the curriculum successfully when they transfer to secondary school.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement of the school are judged as adequate because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision for the school that all staff share;
- the school complies with all the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003;
- school development planning and self-evaluation processes aimed at improving teaching and learning are at an early stage of development;
- staff have few opportunities to undertake professional updating of their knowledge and skills; and
- the school has responded well to the recommendations in the previous inspection report relating to improving the provision for additional learning needs and to meeting the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, but there has been limited progress in responding to the other recommendations.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and proprietor of Craig y Nos need to:

- R1 plan the development of pupils' literacy skills more effectively across the curriculum;
- R2 adapt the work in lessons to meet the needs of all pupils;
- R3 improve the quality of marking and assessment, including the monitoring of pupils' progress;
- R4 develop self-evaluation processes by monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in classes acting on the findings more systematically; and
- R5 improve development planning by setting out required actions, staff responsibilities and resource allocations more clearly.

What happens next?

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend the current development plan to show what action the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to distribute this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents of children at the school.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Overall, the outcomes of National Curriculum assessments indicate that standards are generally good. According to these assessments, most pupils have achieved the expected level at the end of key stage 1 (level 2) and at the end of key stage 2 (level 4) in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. Last year, all learners achieved level 2 in English and mathematics in key stage 1 and level 4 in English in key stage 2. The proportion of pupils who attain above the expected level in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 is high and frequently over 50%. Taken as a whole, boys and girls tend to do as well as each other from year to year.

Pupils in both key stages have good speaking and listening skills and they use these well across the curriculum. Pupils speak confidently and with a suitably wide range of vocabulary. They express their thoughts and opinions clearly and can speak appropriately and easily in formal situations when required.

Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. Many can use a range of strategies to tackle new words. All pupils are keen readers of fiction and enjoy the books they read. On a few occasions, older pupils choose books that are too hard for them and they struggle to understand the full meaning of the text. Many of the Year 6 pupils read out loud with expression and enjoyment.

Pupils' writing skills vary between classes, but they are good in English by the end of key stage 2. The quality of pupils' writing is often best where the focus is on imaginative or independent writing. It is weakest where pupils complete short phrases or sentences linked to worksheets across the curriculum. Pupils do not develop specific skills in note-taking and drafting enough as they move through the school. The handwriting and presentation of pupils' work are often untidy, even where the content of their work is of good quality.

All pupils make good progress relative to their starting points, though a few lower-ability pupils struggle with work that is too difficult for them in a few classes. Those with special educational needs often make very good progress as a result of targeted support.

Pupils' skills in Welsh in key stage 2 are developing well as a result of timetabled Welsh lessons. Pupils use a small amount of incidental Welsh in classes and around the school.

Overall, by the time pupils leave the school, they have acquired the confidence and skills necessary to access and to benefit from a secondary school curriculum.

Wellbeing: Good

The development of pupils' wellbeing is a particular strength of the school. Pupils are proud of their school and feel that they are members of a friendly and supportive community. All pupils display good behaviour in classes and around the school.

Pupils are keen to learn and show a good level of motivation in class and in extra-curricular activities, such as the school choir. A very high proportion of pupils take part in school clubs, teams, musical groups and shows. As part of the choir and orchestra, pupils practise weekly and perform with enjoyment in local care homes, garden society shows, local church services and community council events. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of activities to support local and national charities.

Pupils respond well to the school's house system. The way house captains in Year 6 undertake their roles, including their election with hustings and their running of house meetings, develops a good range of social and life skills among the pupils. However, there are few meetings with the headteacher where they can pass on their views and ideas formally. Pupils outside of Year 6 have fewer opportunities to take on positions of responsibility and to influence aspects of school life relevant to them.

All pupils say that they feel safe in school and enjoy their lessons nearly all of the time. They follow instructions carefully, move between tasks with little fuss and arrive at lessons and other activities, such as music tuition, on time and prepared to work. The overall rate of attendance is good and consistently over 95% annually.

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

Learning experiences are broad and the school provides a curriculum that meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. The school ensures equal access to learning opportunities for all pupils. Lessons in French and Welsh for key stage 2 pupils, and religious education and personal, social and health education for all pupils enrich the curriculum offered. In Years 5 and 6, specialist subject teaching helps pupils to prepare well for the transition to secondary school. However, on occasions, there is an over-reliance on worksheets to deliver too many aspects of the curriculum in humanities and science.

The school also provides for a wide range of extra-curricular activities which include trips and many sporting and musical opportunities. There are effective links with the community that enhance learning. These include the use of the local library and visits from the fire service and the police.

Throughout the school, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. However, opportunities to develop the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects are too limited. Planning to develop these skills systematically across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

The school promotes sustainable development appropriately through recycling and learning about taking care of the Earth. The curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the wider world through study of aspects of other cultures. Pupils also learn satisfactorily about their Welsh culture and language, through the use of Welsh throughout the day and in specific Welsh lessons in key stage 2.

Teaching: Adequate

In the majority of lessons, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons progress at an appropriate pace; pupils achieve the desired outcomes and produce work of good quality. Teachers engage their pupils' interest and manage their behaviour well. They plan well-structured lessons with clear learning outcomes.

In a significant minority of lessons observed, the work is not always adapted appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, teachers rely too heavily on pupils completing simple worksheets and there are not enough challenges for more able pupils. In these cases, lessons do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills and to write independently. Often, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their skills in using ICT.

Teachers mark work regularly and give a lot of useful oral feedback to pupils. This often takes the form of praise, but does not always help pupils to know how to improve their work. In a few cases, pupils evaluate their own or others' work appropriately and suggest how it might be improved.

Teachers assess pupils' progress using a suitable range of standardised tests. This information does not always influence the planning for individual progress in lessons. Teachers do not share examples of work enough in order to moderate and to share information about the standards that pupils achieve.

Parents feel well informed about their children's progress. The school sends parents a suitable report on their child's progress twice a year and there is an annual parents' meeting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There is effective provision for the development of pupils' health and wellbeing. There is an effective induction programme for children joining the school. All staff promote good behaviour and there are many positive interactions between pupils and staff in lessons and around the school. Teachers encourage pupils to participate in a wide range of activities that help to develop pupils' social and emotional skills and their healthy development. Pupils support a range of charities, for example helping a child in Africa with his schooling through sponsorship.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of social responsibility through weekly assemblies. In these, they celebrate a wide range of pupil achievements in sporting, musical and other activities, and they learn about the importance of determination and perseverance. In lessons, pupils discuss issues of moral and social significance thoughtfully, such as the United Nations Rights of the Child.

The school addresses pupils' spiritual development well through the curriculum and in assemblies, such as when pupils reflect on Remembrance Day. Visits by older pupils to commonwealth war graves in France have led pupils to think deeply about war, human life and personal sacrifice.

Pupils' needs are identified early and, where appropriate, advice is sought from other agencies. There are good links with the local authority educational psychologist and speech and language therapists. Teachers devise suitable individual education plans to meet pupils' additional needs and they review them regularly. Pupils with dyslexia receive good support from a specialist teacher.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school provides a warm and welcoming environment with an ethos of respect and courtesy towards others. Pupils have equal access to all areas of the school's provision. There is an appropriate emphasis on learning about aspects of diversity and equality, although, very occasionally, teachers reinforce gender stereotypes too much.

There are no reported incidents of bullying or harassment, and the school has effective measures in place to deal with any incidents should they occur.

The school provides a good range of resources to enable learning across the curriculum. The school has extensive grounds, including a pleasant nature area. It has a large sports hall of good quality. The accommodation is well maintained.

The school complies with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 regarding its health and safety responsibilities.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. All staff share a common set of aims and values set by the headteacher. Together, they have established a family ethos within the school that provides a warm and welcoming place for pupils to work and play. The headteacher operates an open-door policy for parents and they appreciate the way it is easy to speak to the headteacher and other staff. Parents confirm the school is always willing to listen to their views.

Within the school, staff roles are well known, but there are no formal job descriptions. Although the school introduced an appraisal system for teachers after the last inspection, this does not identify staff training needs clearly in relation to raising standards.

The headteacher has sole management responsibility for the school and has no administrative or managerial support. He also has a large teaching commitment. Overall, this limits his capacity to undertake a full range of leadership and management activities.

The school takes good account of a few national priorities, such as the Foundation Phase in the nursery and the National Curriculum in other classes. The headteacher is a director of the recently re-formed Welsh Independent Schools' Council. This aims to spread good practice in the independent sector, but it is too early for this network to impact upon the school's management practices.

The school complies with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. In doing so, it has fully met the recommendation in relation to these standards set out in the previous inspection.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's self-evaluation arrangements have changed little since the previous inspection. Teachers produce their own self-evaluations of teaching and learning in their subject or class and this occasionally leads to improvements. In the nursery, for example, a new brochure for parents has helped raise their awareness of the Foundation Phase. The headteacher monitors pupils' books and lessons, but not systematically.

All staff contributed to the school's self-evaluation report. However, the report does not identify the school's strengths and areas for development effectively, mainly due to a lack of robust evidence on the quality of teaching and learning. The school development plan is brief. It contains a few links to the findings of the self-evaluation report, but it does not identify whole-school priorities for improvement clearly.

Since the previous inspection, subject leaders have begun to provide more curricular support to other staff on an informal basis. Internal networks of professional practice are still at a very early stage.

The school has fully addressed two of the five recommendations from the last inspection report. The school now meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 and has improved its provision for pupils with additional learning needs. The school has not addressed the other recommendations fully.

Partnership working: Good

The school works well in partnership with parents. Most parents are happy with the school and their child's progress. They appreciate the family atmosphere that the school creates and they consider staff to be caring and approachable. This partnership has a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing.

A good partnership exists with the local comprehensive school in preparing pupils to transfer there when they leave school. A few secondary pupils, for example help with netball coaching in the school and, in return, Craig y Nos pupils helped to raise funds for the secondary school's recent netball tour to Canada. Specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6 also prepares pupils well for the move to secondary education. The school has also increased time for teaching Welsh second language to ensure pupils are not disadvantaged in the secondary school. However, there are no arrangements for the joint moderation of pupils' work to ensure consistency in standards and the accuracy of teacher assessments at the end of Year 6.

There are good arrangements in place for the school to liaise with the local education authority and other agencies over provision for pupils with additional learning needs and in relation to safeguarding.

Resource management: Good

The school has sufficient well-qualified teaching staff. It deploys staff sensibly, but opportunities to identify and to meet staff training needs are limited. Teachers generally make good use of the resources available throughout the school. Subject specialists and class teachers identify their requirements and advise the headteacher in an informal way, but without reference to whole-school priorities for development.

As pupils acquire a good range of knowledge, understanding and skills by the end of Year 6, the school provides value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-five parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school. Parents say that their children enjoy school and all say that teachers treat their children fairly and with respect and that their child was helped to settle in well when they joined the school. Nearly all parents who responded state that their children are making good progress and they are satisfied with the behaviour of children at the school. The questionnaires show that nearly all parents feel the quality of teaching, the teachers' expectations of their children and the support they receive are good. Most believe that homework builds well on the work their children do at school.

All parents who responded say that their child feels safe at school and that the school encourages their children to be healthy and to take regular exercise. All believe that the school helps their children to become more mature and to take on responsibility. Nearly all of those who responded believe that the school is well run and that they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems, though a few did not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Forty-four pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Almost all responses were positive. All pupils say they feel safe in school and that the school deals with any bullying well. All know whom to talk to when they feel worried or upset. They agree that the school helps pupils to keep healthy and they say they get a lot of chances to be physically active. All feel that they are doing well at school and know what to do when they find work hard. They say that teachers and support staff help them to make good progress. They say they have enough equipment, books and computers to do their work. All pupils say that the behaviour of other children is good and they can get their work done. They also say that the other children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Barry Norris	Reporting Inspector
Rhona Edwards	Team Inspector
Catherine Barnett	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003: 3 and 5
Gareth Fursland	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' (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