



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

**Llancaeath Junior School
Commercial Street
Nelson
Treharris
CF46 6NF**

Date of inspection: February 2013

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 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Llancaeath Junior school is in the centre of the small town of Nelson in the Rhymney Valley. It comprises two buildings and a separate canteen, which are approximately 100 years old. The school reports that pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from relatively prosperous to economically disadvantaged. Around 22% of pupils receive free school meals, which is below the local authority average, but slightly above the national figure.

There are currently 152 pupils in the school aged between seven and 11, taught in four single age and two mixed-age classes. The number on roll has steadily declined over the last five years.

The school has identified around 20% of pupils as having additional learning needs. A very few have a statement of special educational needs or are looked after by the local authority. No pupils use Welsh as a first language or receive support in English as an additional language.

The school was last inspected in March 2007. A new headteacher was appointed in 2008. There has been a turnover of staff in the last two years and currently three of the seven teachers are on fixed-term contracts.

The individual school budget per pupil for Llancaeath Junior School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £2,778 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Llancaeath Junior School is 66th out of the 75 primary schools in Caerphilly in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's performance is good because:

- standards in literacy across the curriculum are good and above the family, local authority and Wales averages overall;
- standards in numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and thinking skills are good;
- most pupils make at least good progress through the school and achieve or exceed their predicted targets;
- pupils' wellbeing and behaviour are good; and
- teaching is good overall.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- standards overall are improving;
- the headteacher leads the school very effectively;
- the school has a rigorous self-evaluation system that focuses on raising standards; and
- there is a good range of strategic partnerships.

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards in Welsh second language

R2 Improve levels of attendance

R3 Further develop the role of the governing body

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Standards in oracy are above the family, local authority and Wales averages. Nearly all pupils listen attentively in lessons and speak clearly, using a good range of vocabulary to communicate their ideas and opinions.

Standards in reading are also above the family, local authority and Wales averages. Nearly all pupils take an interest in books and develop into independent readers. They read enthusiastically, meaningfully and expressively appropriate to their age and ability. By the end of the key stage, nearly all read competently and confidently across a range of subjects.

Although attainment in writing in 2012, especially among boys, was below the family average, many pupils write at length in a range of forms. Most competently use a variety of styles and vocabulary across a range of different subjects. They produce a good quality and quantity of well-presented work that is punctuated and spelt correctly.

Most pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are good and are used well throughout the curriculum. They apply their thinking skills effectively in most lessons and solve practical everyday problems.

Although most pupils in the school respond appropriately to instructions and simple questions in Welsh, few use the language beyond their Welsh sessions or incidentally, unless prompted. In addition, their reading and writing skills are at an early stage of development. Their understanding of the history and culture of Wales develops well.

In 2012, pupil attainment of the expected level 4 in the core subjects was mostly better than previous years and above the family, local authority and Wales averages. This placed the school among the better 50% of similar schools, except in mathematics. At the higher level 5, more able pupils' performance has been more variable. In 2012, in English it was above the family, local authority and Wales averages. In science it was similar, but in mathematics it was lower. This placed the school among the better 50% of similar schools in all three subjects.

Evidence indicates that most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make at least good progress through the school and achieve or exceed their predicted targets. Overall, girls have done consistently better than boys in all three core subjects, but this trend was reversed in 2012 in mathematics and science.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe, happy and secure in school. They have a good awareness of the importance of keeping healthy and active, although a few express concerns about the lack of time for physical education lessons. All have positive attitudes to school and are motivated to learn.

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. All show respect and concern towards others. Most apply themselves conscientiously and show enthusiasm for their work. They work willingly and co-operatively in different contexts.

Nearly all pupils are actively involved in their own learning and are able to plan and organise their work independently. Generally, most know how well they are doing and are able to address the next steps in their learning.

Attendance at 93% is below that of similar schools and the family, local authority and Wales averages and has been for the last four years. All but a very few pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

The school council is well established and members have a good understanding of their different roles. They actively seek the views of other pupils and are routinely involved in decision-making. The eco, health and learning sub-committees work successfully with staff to monitor aspects of provision and to improve the school environment.

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

Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements.

All staff work together effectively to plan and provide a good range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences. Particularly through the use of ability sets for literacy and numeracy, the school ensures that all pupils' key skills develop progressively and systematically, according to their needs and stage of development.

Withdrawal groups and intervention programmes for literacy, numeracy and personal and social needs contribute significantly to developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem, resulting in an improvement in their attainment.

In Welsh the school has appropriate strategies to improve pupils' oral skills, but there is insufficient focus on planning for progression in reading and writing. Carefully thought out themes successfully promote pupils' awareness of their Welsh culture and heritage.

The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors that enrich pupils' learning experiences and effectively promote their wellbeing and social and life skills. Homework is set regularly in all classes and complements the curriculum well.

The school acts very sustainably in terms of minimising waste, reducing energy usage and recycling. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is well planned across the curriculum and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the principles involved.

Teaching: Good

All teachers know their pupils well and establish good relationships with them. They organise lessons efficiently and often use ICT effectively.

In nearly all lessons teachers make learning intentions clear and ensure all materials are ready, so that learning can proceed promptly. They give clear directions and motivate pupils to achieve through appropriate questioning techniques and by providing regular praise and encouragement.

Where teaching is good, teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and high expectations. They use a range of strategies and enable pupils to formulate and share their own ideas and decisions. They plan activities that are well matched to ability levels and ensure all pupils are continually on task.

Where occasionally there are shortcomings, the pace slows and teachers do not prepare sufficiently for pupils' different needs or ensure that instructions are immediately followed.

Statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting are fulfilled. The standardised assessments and tracking systems used by the school effectively identify pupils' progress and enable teachers to set appropriate end of year targets.

In most classes appropriate assessment for learning strategies are implemented successfully. The school is developing approaches to identifying learning targets within its literacy and numeracy sets. This results in the majority of pupils knowing how well they are achieving.

The school has a specific marking code and policy, which all teachers apply. All work is marked conscientiously. Comments are positive and supportive, but do not always show clearly what pupils need to do to improve.

Annual pupil reports for parents provide appropriate targets in the core subjects and meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has appropriate policies and arrangements for promoting healthy living and pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing. It has an effective pastoral system and supports all pupils well through its personal and social education programme.

All pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school fosters values of honesty, fairness and respect, so that pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong. Approaches to behaviour management are consistently good.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The site and buildings are secure and the caretaker, headteacher and designated governor undertake regular health and safety checks. The school deals promptly and effectively with any incidents of bullying.

While there are measures in place for monitoring and promoting good attendance, these are not sufficiently rigorous to reduce absences.

Provision for children with additional learning needs is good. Needs are identified early and progress is well monitored. Pupil-friendly individual education plans are of very good quality. They establish suitable targets for improvement, which are reviewed regularly with pupils and parents in line with statutory requirements.

The school works effectively in partnership with external agencies and specialist services to meet pupils' needs.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a fully inclusive community. It provides all pupils with equal access to every aspect of school life, whatever their background, gender or ability.

The school respects and celebrates diversity, opposes any form of discrimination or stereotyping and promotes an ethos of care for one another.

Pupils with disabilities integrate well into the daily life of the school and receive high quality support from their peers and staff. There are excellent arrangements to ensure they are not disadvantaged in any way.

The buildings are very well maintained and displays enhance the learning environment. Classrooms are of a sufficient size and good use is made of the outdoor environment to provide pupils with opportunities to learn and play.

There are sufficient learning resources across the school with very good provision for ICT, although there is a general shortage of Welsh materials.

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

The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She has high expectations and a clear vision for the future. The deputy headteacher is supportive and undertakes a number of important roles.

Distributed leadership is well developed, especially through the extended senior management team, who successfully oversee the core subjects and ICT, in which good standards are evident. All staff work well together, contribute to strategic planning and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Governors are supportive of the school and ensure they meet statutory requirements. They are well informed and successfully promote community links. Most visit the school periodically and attend training events. However, they are not sufficiently involved in setting the school's strategic direction and their role as a critical friend is in the early stages of development.

The school takes good account of local and national priorities. For example, raising standards in literacy and numeracy is a major focus of the current school development plan.

Improving quality: Good

The school has a rigorous self-evaluation system that focuses on raising standards. The process involves all staff and includes a thorough analysis of performance data, first-hand monitoring of the provision and reviewing all aspects of the school's work.

The school takes the views of pupils, parents and governors into account. The school council, in particular, contributes to the self-evaluation process very effectively, for example through its learning sub-committee which focuses on school improvement.

The school assesses its strengths and weaknesses accurately and there is a clear link between self-evaluation and the school development plan, which sets clear and realistic priorities. The plan includes challenging and measurable targets, as well as appropriate responsibilities, well-defined time schedules and resource implications.

The school is developing into an effective learning community and there is a healthy culture of collaboration between staff, which is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing. Networking with other local schools in the cluster is developing well and having a positive influence on teaching and curriculum development, for example in mathematics.

The school has effectively addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection, although standards in Welsh second language remain underdeveloped.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a good range of strategic partnerships that are effective in enriching and supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing.

The school promotes good relationships with parents. The quality and variety of information keeps them well informed and enables them to support their children's learning. A few parents actively help the school, for example through the 'Friends' Association'.

The school has forged strong links with the immediate community. For example, it hosts an intergenerational computer club and pupils regularly visit the local residential home. It also has beneficial partnerships with local colleges and training institutions by providing placements for students.

Cluster schools collaborate effectively on a range of current initiatives, including the moderation and standardisation of pupils' work. There are good transition links with the receiving secondary schools and the feeder infant school.

Resource management: Good

The school is appropriately staffed and all employees have agreed job descriptions. Teachers are suitably qualified and learning support assistants are effectively deployed to supervise pupils within classes or in withdrawal groups in relation to intervention programmes.

The school clerk and caretaker take on a range of roles and responsibilities and make an important contribution to the efficient administration and maintenance of the school.

All staff participate in regular training events in line with their professional and personal development targets and whole school priorities. Due to the number of new appointments, recent in-house training has focused on developing consistency of practice across the school.

Performance management procedures have been reviewed and meet statutory requirements. All staff are involved and share a common target linked to the school development plan and local and national priorities.

The school manages its accommodation, resources and budget effectively. The budget is balanced and financial decisions are based on the identified needs of the school and its pupils.

Due to the good outcomes achieved by pupils and the quality of provision overall, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2012, in key stage 2, pupil attainment of the expected level 4 overall and in English was better than the previous four years and above the family, local authority and Wales averages. In mathematics and science it was better than most previous years and above the family, local authority and Wales averages, except for mathematics, which was similar to the family average. This placed the school among the better 50% of similar schools except in mathematics. At the higher level 5, more able pupils' attainment has been more variable. In 2012, in English it was above the family, local authority and Wales averages. In science it was similar, but in mathematics it was lower. This placed the school among the better 50% of similar school in all three subjects.

In 2012, results in oracy and reading were above the family, local authority and Wales averages. However, attainment in writing, especially among boys, was below the family average. Overall, girls have done consistently better than boys in all three core subjects at both levels, but this trend was reversed in 2012 in mathematics and science.

Evidence indicates that most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make at least good progress through the school and achieve or exceed their predicted targets.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parents' questionnaires due to the small number of responses received (fewer than 10).

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and two pupils completed the questionnaire. Their responses overall were similar to national norms.

All pupils say they that they:

- are helped to learn and to make progress.

Nearly all pupils say that they:

- feel safe in school;
- learn how to keep healthy;
- are doing well at school;
- know whom to ask if they find work hard; and
- have enough books, computers and equipment.

Most pupils say that:

- the school deals well with any bullying;
- they have plenty of opportunities for regular exercise;
- they know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- they think homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school;
and
- pupils behave well in class so they can get their work done.

Many pupils say that:

- nearly all pupils behave well at playtimes and lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

David Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Jayne Edwards	Peer Inspector
Lisa Greenhalgh	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.