



*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**

**Gwauncelyn Primary School  
Heol Deg  
Tonteg  
Pontypridd  
CF38 1BU**

**Date of inspection: June 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:

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

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

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## Context

Gwauncelyn Primary is a community school in Tonteg, near Pontypridd. It was formed by the amalgamation of Gwauncelyn Infant and Junior Schools in September 2003. Significant building work has been undertaken to join the two original buildings.

There are 360 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven. The school is organised into 13 classes. Pupils come from a range of homes around the school. The school reports that three-quarters of the pupils come from relatively prosperous homes and the remaining quarter from homes that are neither prosperous nor disadvantaged.

None of the pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Two per cent of the pupils speak languages other than English at home. The intake covers the full range of ability. About 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the all-Wales average of around 19%. Ten per cent of pupils have special educational needs, but no pupil has a statement of special educational need.

The current headteacher was appointed in September 2004.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Gwauncelyn primary is £2,769 which compares with a maximum of £9,064 and a minimum of £2,553 for primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The school has the 102nd highest budget per pupil out of the 116 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- by the end of key stage 2 most pupils have well developed key skills which they use across the curriculum;
- behaviour and attitudes are very good throughout the school;
- nearly all pupils are enthusiastic learners who apply themselves well; and
- relationships between staff and pupils are very good.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- senior leaders work well as a team to ensure good outcomes for pupils by the time they leave the school;
- the governing body is knowledgeable and well informed about the school's performance and its life and work; and
- the school implements policies to meet national and local priorities well.

## Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

- R1 improve pupils' reading and writing skills in the Foundation Phase and Year 2;
- R2 improve the accuracy of teacher assessment for pupils at the end of key stage 1;
- R3 implement systems to improve attendance rates against those of similar schools;  
and
- R4 ensure greater equality of opportunity for younger pupils in school activities.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. They demonstrate increasing levels of confidence in using these skills as they move through the school. Older pupils sustain their levels of concentration for extended periods and express their ideas, opinions and feelings eloquently using a wide range of vocabulary.

By the end of key stage 2, many pupils are confident, fluent and expressive readers. More able pupils have well developed and advanced reading skills. They use these skills well when, for example, they read a text linked to their history topic on the Second World War. Many pupils are developing good independent research skills. However, in the Foundation Phase and Year 2, around half of pupils' have underdeveloped reading skills, although their ability to use sounds to build words is beginning to develop.

In key stage 2, many pupils develop good independent writing skills. They write confidently and at length for a range of purposes and audiences, using a wide choice of vocabulary. They spell words with increasing accuracy and use appropriate punctuation well. Most pupils' presentation and handwriting are good. However, by the end of key stage 1, many pupils lack the ability to write independently and at length in work across the curriculum. Their knowledge of basic punctuation and spelling is insecure and their presentation and handwriting is often poor.

Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in relation to their abilities. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 who follow programmes such as 'Catch-up reading' make good progress within a short space of time.

Pupils' Welsh language skills are developing well as they move through the school. Most pupils respond appropriately to a variety of commands and instructions in Welsh. Many answer questions using the range of patterns they have learned confidently. In key stage 2 many pupils read and write in Welsh with developing accuracy, but only a few write at length.

In key stage 2, over the last three years, when compared to similar schools, results in the core subject indicator (the expected level for pupils of eleven years of age in English, mathematics and science), English and mathematics have varied but show an overall upward trend and are above the average for other schools in the family. In 2010 all results were well above the local authority and all-Wales averages. Boys outperformed girls and pupils receiving free school meals performed considerably better than those in other schools in the family and well above local authority and all-Wales averages. This is the opposite of national trends. There has also been an overall upward trend in pupils achieving level 5 over the last four years and results are now around the family average for all three core subjects.

Baseline scores indicate that pupils enter the reception class with very good levels of skills for their age. For the last three years, results in key stage 1 in the core subject indicator (the expected level for pupils of seven years of age), English, mathematics and science have been above the local authority and all-Wales averages, with no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. However when compared to similar schools, overall results show a downward trend, with only results in science showing a slight improvement. In 2010, with the exception of English, results compared to schools in the same family were below average. The proportion of pupils achieving above the expected level (level 3) shows an overall decline in English over the last three years. Results in maths and science are more variable but are below the family average for the last two years.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils are polite, respectful and have very good manners. Behaviour is very good at all times. Nearly all pupils enjoy their lessons and by the end of Year 6, they approach tasks with enjoyment and concentrate well for sustained periods, demonstrating good levels of independent learning.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of good school attendance and most arrive punctually. However, overall attendance rates place the school in the bottom 25% in comparison with the attendance rates of similar schools. In addition, there has been a downward trend in attendance levels over the last four years.

All pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and fit. They feel safe and valued in school and know their opinions matter. The school council is active and enthusiastic. They regularly organise charity fundraising events such as 'Hats for Haiti' and they recently re-drafted the home/school agreement to help ensure safe use of the internet at home. Pupils also enjoy taking on additional responsibilities such as 'play leaders' at break and lunch times and this has a very positive impact on behaviour during 'free time'. Pupils enjoy taking part in community events such as the harvest service at the local Salem chapel

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

The curriculum is broad, balanced and generally flexible enough to meet the needs of all pupils.

Teachers plan well to provide a good variety of enriching and stimulating experiences. Nearly all teachers provide pupils with good opportunities for developing their speaking and listening skills throughout the school. The planning and delivery of numeracy skills is generally good, although the use of these skills is not evident in all subjects. All teachers in key stage 2 provide good opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills. The overuse of worksheets and lack of teacher expectation inhibits pupils' ability to write at length in Foundation Phase and key stage 1.

Provision for the Welsh language is good. The school provides a suitable range of opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the history and traditions of Wales.

The eco committee is enthusiastic and shows a good understanding of the importance of caring for the environment both locally and globally. The committee is active in helping to develop the school grounds with help from parents and local businesses. Pupils' understanding of their role as global citizens is developing through fair-trade activities and links with a school in Uganda.

### **Teaching: Good**

The overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers' planning is detailed and often builds on previous learning successfully. Where teaching is effective, teachers use a good variety of learning strategies and a wide range of resources to support pupils' learning. They set stimulating tasks to engage pupils' interest well. Most teachers use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' understanding in a positive learning environment. All teachers use learning support assistants well to provide additional support. In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently and the pace of the lessons is too slow.

Teachers' use of pupil self-evaluation, peer evaluation and target setting are developing well in key stage 2. Assessment for learning techniques are used successfully in most classes. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and comment positively on their achievements. However, occasionally comments are unclear and do not help pupils improve their work.

The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress. It collects a good range of data to identify priorities for improvements in standards. However, teacher assessment at the end of key stage 1 is not secure.

Reports to parents are clear and informative. Most parents feel they are well informed about their children's achievements and progress.

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

The school actively encourages pupils to be healthy and offers a good range of extra-curricular clubs, although these are only open to pupils in key stage 2.

There are successful arrangements to ensure pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through good quality acts of collective worship and a range of visits and visitors.

Good liaison with outside agencies such as the local police and the school nurse impacts positively on pupils' levels of wellbeing. Although there are useful strategies in place to address the persistent poor attendance of a minority of pupils, the school does not have a first day response system for most pupils when they are absent.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. There are appropriate systems for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with additional needs. Learning support assistants work effectively within classes and in withdrawal groups. Individual educational plans are child-friendly and are regularly evaluated and updated. The school keeps parents and carers well informed and fully aware of their child's progress.

### **Learning environment: Good**

All pupils feel that they are treated fairly and with respect. They are encouraged to take on responsibilities and respond positively to the challenge. Most aspects of the curriculum are fully accessible to all pupils. However, the school council, eco committee and extra-curricular clubs are only offered to key stage 2 pupils.

The school is bright and welcoming. There are colourful displays of pupils' work throughout and these enhance the environment. Outside areas are well developed to support a wide variety of learning activities. Classrooms have good quality resources and the school library has a comprehensive range of books for pupils' use.

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

The headteacher provides clear, purposeful leadership. Members of the senior management team communicate well with staff and encourage good teamwork at all levels. Most senior managers take forward developments in their own areas of responsibility effectively, while also contributing appropriately to whole-school improvements.

All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They understand the current priorities for development in the school improvement plan. Performance management arrangements are sound and the targets set reflect the school's priorities for improvement.

The governing body supports the school well. It has a clear understanding of its role and is a critical friend to the school. There is an appropriate range of active committees that know the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors look at school performance data regularly and are involved in evaluation and planning at whole school level. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations effectively.

All staff implement policies and initiatives that meet local and national priorities well. These recent initiatives have a positive impact on pupils' standards, especially in key stage 2.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school self-evaluation report is effective in identifying many of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is embedded into the life and work of the school and is based on first-hand evidence. As a result, senior managers

identify strengths and areas for development in a systematic way and these feed clearly into the school development plan.

The development plan is a detailed document. It includes clear objectives, success criteria and specific outcomes. Each priority is based on either school or national initiatives.

The school takes the views of pupils and parents seriously through the regular use of questionnaires. Outcomes are analysed systematically and improvements are made to aspects of school life, for example the introduction of the 'moodle' information and communication system.

Leaders and teachers are involved in a range of networks of professional practice. The school is active within the local cluster of schools and has established links between the new all-Wales family of schools cluster. Staff collaborate effectively in a few professional learning communities within and across schools, one of which has had a very positive impact on reading standards in key stage 2.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school works well in partnership with other providers. There are several successful Bryncelynnog cluster of schools initiatives, such as the joint funding of a cluster Welsh teacher.

The active parent teacher association raises significant additional funding for the school. The breakfast club and after school swimming club are well attended, and these partnerships enrich and support pupils' learning and wellbeing.

The school uses the local community and its people well to enhance pupils' learning experiences. The school has effective partnerships with local universities and further education colleges and students regularly use the school for their work placements.

Nearly all parents and carers speak highly of the effective arrangements made for pupils new to the school. There are good links with the local playgroup. The effective transition arrangements with Bryncelynnog school prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school has sufficient and appropriately qualified teaching staff to deliver a broad curriculum. Learning support assistants are well qualified. Teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is generally well organised to ensure continuity for pupils. All members of staff receive appropriate training in line with their individual training needs and the school's priorities for development.

The school manages its financial resources well in line with identified priorities.

By the end of Year 6 nearly all pupils attain well. Therefore, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Pupil questionnaires

All pupils say they:

- feel safe in school;
- know who to talk to if they are worried or upset; and
- think the school teaches them to be healthy.

Nearly all pupils think:

- the school deals well with any bullying;
- they have lots of chances for regular exercise;
- they are doing well at school;
- teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress; and
- they know who to ask if they find their work hard.

Most pupils agree:

- homework helps them to understand and improve their school work;
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work;
- nearly all pupils behave well at play and lunch times; and
- other children behave well and they can get their class-work done.

#### Parent questionnaires (approximately 90 responses)

All parents are satisfied with the school overall and say their child likes school. They think children are helped to settle in well when they start school and pupils behave well. All parents say staff treat children fairly and with respect and the school provides a good range of activities, including trips and visits. All parents think the school is well run and are comfortable to approach the school with questions, suggestions or problems.

Nearly all parents think their children are making good progress and they say teaching is good with staff having high expectations for pupils to work hard and do their best. They also feel homework builds well on work done in school. Nearly all parents think their children receive appropriate additional support if they have particular needs. They think their children are safe in school and are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise. Nearly all parents say the school encourages children to mature and take on responsibility and children are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school's complaints procedures are understood by nearly all parents.

Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Rhona Edwards HMI	Reporting Inspector
Ann Jones HMI	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Edna Davies	Peer Inspector
Michael Lewis	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11