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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

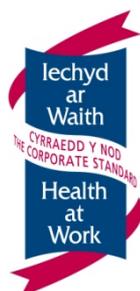
A report on

**Bryn Celyn Primary School
Glyn Collen
Pentwyn
Cardiff
CF23 7ES**

Date of inspection: November 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 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Bryn Celyn Primary School is situated in Pentwyn on the outskirts of Cardiff. It serves the Pentwyn housing estate, which consists of both rented and private housing. Unemployment is high and the area is economically disadvantaged. Fifty-five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is significantly higher than the national and local averages.

Although pupil numbers have decreased every year for the past four years, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils starting in the nursery this year. Currently, 142 full-time pupils aged between 4 and 11 years attend the school. In addition to this, 35 three-year-olds attend part time in the morning or afternoon.

Eighty-three per cent of pupils are White British and nearly all come from homes where English is spoken. None come from Welsh speaking homes. Seventeen pupils have English as an additional language. Fourteen per cent of these pupils are new to English and 86% are in the early stages of acquiring the language. Fifty-five per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs.

The school has been through a period of significant change over the past few years and has had several acting headteachers. It is now federated with Oakfield Primary School in St Mellons. This arrangement was formalised in the spring term of 2011, although it had been working informally for a year prior to this. The local authority will review the arrangement after three years. The current headteacher was appointed in the spring term of 2011. There is also an executive headteacher who shares his time between the two schools in the federation.

The individual school budget per pupil for Bryn Celyn Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4,155 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £19,708 and the minimum is £2,828. Bryn Celyn Primary School is 19th out of the 116 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate. This is because:

- pupils make a good start to their learning and the majority make sound progress over time;
- most pupils communicate confidently with others;
- pupils feel safe in school; they are happy and many develop positive attitudes to learning, especially in the Foundation Phase and through a range of interesting extra-curricular activities;
- nearly all pupils behave well; and
- the use of support staff to deliver specific programmes has a positive impact on the achievement of pupils with additional learning needs.

However:

- pupils' standards in writing, numeracy, science and Welsh are not good enough;
- too many teachers have low expectations of pupils and do not challenge them sufficiently;
- staff do not use assessment effectively enough to move pupils forward in their learning;
- rates of attendance do not compare well to those of other, similar schools; and
- the school does not have an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the headteacher and executive headteacher have a clear vision for the school;
- the headteacher has recently introduced an appropriate range of processes to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and identify priorities for improvement;
- during the past two years, senior leaders have brought about significant improvements in pupil behaviour and wellbeing; and
- the school has developed a good range of strategic partnerships that focus effectively on improving pupils' standards and wellbeing over time.

However:

- senior leaders have not shared the school's aims with all stakeholders effectively enough to ensure everyone's full understanding and commitment;

- governors do not contribute well enough to shaping the strategic direction of the school, nor do they challenge the school in relation to standards and quality;
- self-evaluation and school improvement planning does not always accurately identify targets which will have the greatest impact on standards;
- many initiatives are very new and it is too early to evaluate their impact on standards; and
- progress since the last inspection is not good enough.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in writing and numeracy across the curriculum and in science and Welsh;
- R2 improve teaching and assessment to ensure that all pupils are challenged and know how to move forward in their learning;
- R3 develop the role of the governing body in setting the strategic direction of the school and in challenging performance;
- R4 carry out self-evaluation processes rigorously to identify school improvement priorities linked closely to improving pupils' standards;
- R5 improve attendance; and
- R6 address shortcomings identified in safeguarding procedures.

What happens next?

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress 12 months after the publication of the report.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Many pupils enter the school with below average skills in literacy, communication and numeracy. Although end of key stage teacher assessments in 2011 suggest that many seven-years-olds achieve well, standards in pupils' books and results of standardised tests do not confirm these good standards. Outcomes in English, mathematics and science have varied considerably over the past five years, but are usually below average when compared to those of other, similar schools.

Pupils' results at the age of 11 have gradually risen over the past five years, particularly in English and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books does not always match these assessments accurately. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels (level 3 at age seven and level 5 at age eleven) in English, mathematics and science has been consistently below average for the last five years, when compared to performance levels in other similar schools.

In 2011, boys' achievement at the age of seven was better than girls', but, at 11, girls did better than boys, particularly in English and science. There was no significant difference between the work of boys and girls observed during the inspection, although girls demonstrated more mature oral communication skills. Many pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress from their starting points and achieve the targets that the school sets for them. The gap between the achievement of pupils who receive free school meals and those who do not has closed considerably over the past two years. However, in many classes, more able pupils do not achieve high enough standards.

Progress and achievement during lessons is good in a few year groups. Most nursery and reception pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. The majority continue to progress appropriately throughout the Foundation Phase, although a minority do not achieve good enough standards across all areas of learning. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils recall previous learning well, but they do not always move on as quickly and effectively as they could and this limits their achievement over time.

Many pupils develop good speaking and listening skills. They respond appropriately to questions and communicate effectively with others in formal and informal situations. Many pupils read at a level suitable for their age and stage of development. They enjoy books and reading, and older and more able pupils are developing good skills of skimming and scanning, which they use effectively when undertaking research. These pupils use their reading skills well to access other areas of learning. A few pupils in the Foundation Phase rely on a limited range of strategies, such as the use of picture clues, to read unfamiliar words. These pupils do have a firm enough grasp of phonics to build words confidently.

Standards in writing are more varied. Pupils in the nursery and reception class are keen to 'write' and the majority of pupils build on this good start in Year 1 and Year 2. By the end of the Foundation Phase, the majority communicate meaning appropriately through their writing and use a limited range of punctuation correctly. However, progress is not as good at key stage 2. A significant minority of older pupils do not write well enough in relation to their age and ability. These pupils write in a limited range of forms. They do not develop ideas in interesting ways and many do not consistently spell familiar words correctly or use an appropriate range of punctuation accurately.

Pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology and they apply these skills effectively in a range of subjects. However, the use of numeracy skills to enhance learning is not strong. Pupils also make limited progress in developing their use of the Welsh language. Most understand and respond to basic instructions and young pupils use an appropriate range of phrases and topic vocabulary regularly. However, older pupils do not progress well enough from this sound starting point.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and have a good awareness of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Most behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They are courteous and caring towards one another and work well together. However, pupils do not develop good enough skills to improve their own learning effectively.

Attendance and punctuality have improved slowly over the past five years. Despite this, at below 91%, attendance does not compare well with that of other similar schools and has been consistently in the bottom quarter.

The school council helps to shape a few elements of school life by running the healthy tuck shop and organising playground games. However, pupils have a limited influence on the way they are taught and what and how they learn.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school provides a range of learning experiences, which cover curriculum requirements appropriately. Where planning and organisation are most effective, particularly in the lower Foundation Phase, activities engage and motivate all pupils. However, in many classes, learning experiences do not provide enough challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able.

The school's out-of-hours programme provides a good balance of activities that have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. The cookery club strengthens pupils' understanding of healthy eating, and boys' attitudes to reading and writing are improving significantly as a result of the boys' comic club.

The school's provision for developing skills in information and communication technology, reading and oracy has begun to bring about improved outcomes for many pupils. However, there are limited opportunities for many pupils to apply their skills in numeracy and writing across the curriculum.

The school's eco-committee contributes effectively to developing pupils' understanding of sustainability by raising all pupils' awareness of their role in recycling and saving energy. The range of opportunities available to pupils through the school's links with Gambia and other countries enables pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world well.

Provision for learning the Welsh language is insufficiently progressive. This means that pupils fail to build on the good foundations put in place when they are very young. Limited opportunities also restrict pupils' knowledge and understanding of the historical and cultural characteristics of Wales.

Teaching: Adequate

Most adults establish good working relationships with pupils that foster learning. They act as good language role models for pupils and they manage pupils' behaviour effectively. In the few classes where teaching is good overall, staff use a wide range of teaching approaches. They have reliable subject knowledge and they plan lessons that have clear objectives. Resources are used well to stimulate pupils and meet their needs effectively. However, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable and does not always challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

The school gathers a wide range of pupil assessment data and a whole school approach to tracking pupils is in place. However, there are no appropriate procedures in place to ensure that teachers' assessment of pupils' achievements is accurate. Staff do not always analyse the available data well enough to plan effectively for all pupils. Annual reports to parents provide clear information about pupils' achievements and identify suitable targets for improvement. Teachers mark books regularly and give pupils praise and encouragement. However, feedback does not focus well enough on how pupils can improve their work. Opportunities to involve pupils in assessing their own and others' learning are limited.

Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory

The school has generally effective arrangements for promoting pupils' wellbeing and healthy lifestyles. There are procedures to encourage regular attendance and these are having a positive impact. The school's robust approach to improving pupil behaviour in recent years has created a pleasant ethos in the school.

There is an appropriate range of provision to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This includes good use of specific programmes to encourage pupils' social and emotional development. Staff work successfully with a relevant range of specialist services to support vulnerable pupils and their families. The impact of the work of the educational welfare officer and a local authority language intervention impacts significantly on attendance and learning outcomes for a few pupils. Regular 'team around the school' meetings and other local authority initiatives support pupils at risk of exclusion effectively.

The school does not have an appropriate policy for safeguarding. Procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues are not fully developed.

The school identifies children with specific learning needs early and makes appropriate provision to address their needs. Support staff deliver literacy interventions effectively and this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' standards in literacy. Individual education plans are in place, but targets are not always specific enough for staff to measure improvements accurately.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community where there is a clear emphasis on pupils developing tolerant attitudes and recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. Appropriate policies and procedures support staff in dealing with any issues of oppressive behaviour and these have been effective in improving pupil wellbeing.

The school building and grounds are well maintained. The provision for outdoor learning and the forest area are particularly effective in enhancing learning for Foundation Phase pupils. There are plenty of good quality resources that match pupils' learning needs well. Wall displays celebrate pupils' work appropriately and help to provide a stimulating learning environment.

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

The headteacher and executive headteacher have an agreed vision for the school's future. They have shared their aims with staff, governors and parents, but they have not successfully secured everyone's full understanding and commitment. Leaders have, however, made significant progress in addressing important issues of behaviour, improving pupils' attitudes to learning and reducing the deficit budget. They have begun to actively challenge staff to raise their expectations and improve standards. Appropriate job descriptions are in place for many staff, although those for senior leaders are not specific enough for them to be clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Leaders analyse data conscientiously and discuss the outcomes with staff regularly. However, they do not always ensure that teachers use this data accurately to monitor pupils' progress and set challenging and realistic targets for improvement. Staff meet regularly, but discussions do not always focus well enough on raising standards of achievement and improving the quality of teaching.

The newly-federated governing body is supportive of the school and has a growing understanding of its role as a critical friend. However, governors do not have a big enough impact on setting the school's strategic direction and most do not hold the school to account for the standards it achieves. A very few documents do not meet statutory requirements.

The school has made sound progress in addressing national and local priorities. The implementation of the Foundation Phase is progressing well and has a positive

impact on pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning. Several initiatives which focus on enhancing pupils' literacy skills are beginning to improve standards.

Improving quality: Adequate

The headteacher and executive headteacher have worked together productively to bring about improvements in several specific areas over the last two years. The headteacher has put sound procedures into place to evaluate how well the school is performing, including lesson observations and scrutiny of teachers' planning. This has improved the consistency of provision between classes to some extent. She supports her colleagues effectively in preparing comprehensive curriculum actions plans that provide a range of relevant targets for improvement and provide the basis for the school strategic plan. Other self-evaluation procedures, such as the scrutiny of pupils' books, are in place, but are in the early stages of development. These processes encourage all staff to be fully involved in self-evaluation, but they do not yet focus well enough on standards and the quality of teaching. This limits the effectiveness of leaders in prioritising targets for improvement accurately.

A few teachers are involved in a network of schools looking at provision for more able and talented pupils in mathematics. The work has a clear focus and relates appropriately to one of the school's priorities, but it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

Although there have been improvements in relation to all of the recommendations from the last inspection, progress has not been good enough overall. Shortcomings still exist in a few important areas.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a comprehensive range of partnerships, which link well to the needs of pupils and their families. Staff work well with outside agencies to tackle, for example, the link between disadvantage and underachievement, to improve behaviour and attendance. The headteacher has developed close links with the community focused schools co-ordinator and the local authority to develop a range of relevant initiatives to improve literacy skills and partnership with parents. The boys' comic club and several family learning schemes make a positive contribution to pupils' learning experiences and improve parents' understanding of how to help their children.

Weekly 'Stay and Play' sessions strengthen partnerships with families with pre-school children. This provision is successful in developing children's early literacy skills in readiness for starting school and has contributed significantly to the rise in the number of pupils entering the nursery this year.

The school has a few appropriate links with its federated school that enhance pupils' experiences, such as opportunities for pupils to be involved in joint musical events. Staff collaborate appropriately with other cluster schools and the local high school to improve transition and this strengthens continuity in learning and wellbeing. However, end-of-key-stage moderation procedures are not yet robust enough to ensure the accuracy of pupil assessment.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has a suitable range of well qualified staff, although leaders do not always deploy them appropriately in upper Foundation Phase classes. Work to reduce the deficit budget has been successful and expenditure is generally in line with the needs of the school.

Staff make appropriate use of their time for planning, preparation and assessment. The deployment of a teacher with specific skills in information and communication technology has been effective in raising pupils' skills.

Teaching assistants receive relevant support for their professional development needs, but performance management arrangements for teachers and the requirements of the national agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' are not always fully met.

In view of the adequate standards achieved by pupils and shortcomings in provision and leadership, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Many pupils enter the school with below average skills in literacy, communication and numeracy. Although end of key stage teacher assessments in 2011 suggest that many seven-years-olds achieve well, standards in pupils' books and results of standardised tests do not support teacher assessments. Outcomes in English, mathematics and science have varied considerably, but have been well below national, local authority and family of school averages for four out of the last five years. According to data, attainment in English has risen overall, with significant improvements in oracy, reading and writing over the past two years. However, there is insufficient evidence in pupils' books to confirm the accuracy of these improvements. There have also been improvements in science attainment over the past two years, according to teacher assessments. Improvement in mathematics outcomes at the age of seven is slower. Achievement at the higher level 3 in English, mathematics and science is consistently below national, local authority and family of schools averages, although it is improving gradually in English.

Pupils' results at the age of eleven have gradually risen over the past five years, particularly in English and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books does not always reflect this trend. Teacher assessments in 2011 show that achievement at the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science is in line with national and local authority averages and just below that of similar schools. Reported performance in English rose significantly this year after placing the school in the bottom quarter of other, similar schools for three out of the four previous years. Similarly, except for 2011, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 4 in mathematics and science was consistently in the lower half when compared to the situation in other, similar schools. Achievement at the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science is consistently below national, local authority and family of schools averages.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

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

Responses to learner questionnaires

Eighty-one pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and responses to most questions were positive. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and they know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. Nearly all agree that the school helps them to be healthy and provides them with plenty of opportunities to be physically active. Most feel that they are doing well at school and nearly all feel strongly that teachers and support staff help them to learn and make progress. A few have concerns about behaviour in the classroom and on the playground, but this is generally in line with national averages. Fourteen per cent of pupils are not certain that the schools deal well with bullying and this is slightly higher than in schools across Wales. Nearly all think that there are enough resources to enable them to learn effectively and most believe that homework helps them to improve on their work in school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Sarah Morgan	Reporting Inspector
Rick Hawkley	Team Inspector
Anwen Griffith	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Debbie Woodward	Peer Inspector
Elizabeth Keys	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