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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Brynnau Primary School
William Street
Bryнна
Pontyclun
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF72 9QJ**

Date of inspection: 8 - 10 March 2011

by

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for

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

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

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

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Context

Brynnau Primary School is situated in the village of Brynna in the southwestern corner of Rhondda Cynon Taf in close proximity to the M4. There are 243 pupils on roll aged between three and eleven years. Since the last inspection in 2005 the number of pupils, classes and staff has increased. The head teacher was appointed in April 2001. Pupils are taught in nine classes and the accommodation comprises of a traditional building built in 1904 that was extended in 1998 and three demountable classrooms. Improvements to the accommodation and grounds provide for the Foundation Phase and skills based learning.

The school describes the locality it serves as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority (LA). Nineteen per cent receive free school meals. Eleven per cent have additional learning needs (ALN) and one has a statement of special educational need (SEN). Ninety-seven per cent of pupils are White British and the remainder have other white backgrounds. A very few have English as an additional language and none is fluent in Welsh.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Brynnau Primary School is £2,917 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 93rd highest budget per pupil out of the 116 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- standards of performance compare well with similar schools;
- the promotion of wellbeing is effective;
- teaching is good and occasionally excellent;
- leadership promotes excellent partnership working; and
- the outdoor learning environment is an excellent feature.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership is reflective and provides clear educational direction;
- strategies for self-evaluation are well established;
- the school development plan (SDP) sets achievable goals; and
- the direction of improvement strategies is well considered.

Recommendations

Brynnau Primary School needs to continue to implement its SDP in order to:

- R1 further improve progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially for more able pupils;
- R2 build on pupils' ability to shape and develop what and how they learn; and
- R3 refine planning to ensure cross-curricular contexts for learning consistently promote a wide range of skills.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many children enter the Foundation Phase with skills below those normally expected for children of their age. Brynnau is the most challenged in a family of similar schools. Over recent years its results are almost always above figures for the LA, Wales and the family of schools. At the end of Year 6 results show strong added value.

In 2010, when compared to national benchmarks for schools with similar circumstances, results in key stage 1 (KS1) are in the highest 50 per cent of schools for English, mathematics and science, and also for the core subject indicator (CSI). These results are above average compared with Wales, the LA and the family of schools. The proportion attaining level 3 in the core subjects is also above figures for these comparators.

At key stage 2 (KS2) pupils' results in 2010 are in the highest 25 per cent of similar schools in the core subjects and for the CSI. These results are above average compared with Wales, the LA and a family of schools. The proportion attaining level 5 in mathematics and science is also above all three comparators, although in English figures are above the LA and Wales, but below the family of schools. Over the past three years, there is an improving trend in the school's performance.

At KS1 the trend at expected levels in mathematics, science and for the CSI is upward over three years. In English there is fluctuation, but the underlying trend is upward. Performance at level 3 in mathematics remains steady, but there is a slight

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dip in English and science. At KS2 results in 2010 in English, science and the CSI are an improvement compared to 2009. Over the last four years in mathematics the overall trend is static and in science it is upward, but in English it is downward. In the CSI it is static. At level 5 it is upward in science, downward in mathematics and broadly static in English.

Girls outperform boys in both key stages; this is most evident in English. Pupils with ALN perform well in relation to their targets and those having English as an additional language achieve similar standards to their peers. More able pupils also achieve well, but not all consistently attain the highest standards. Progress in literacy, numeracy and information communications technology (ICT) is good. Many older pupils' competence in speaking, listening, reading and ICT is strong and a majority write well at length.

Standards in Welsh language development in the Foundation Phase and KS1 are good and most are confident in asking and answering questions. In KS2 results indicate standards are adequate, but observations show they are improving as competence in communication skills increases in everyday contexts.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils have very positive attitudes to keeping healthy and safe. They have a strong awareness of what makes a healthy lifestyle. They eat healthily in school and most take part in a good range of physical activities. Most pupils enjoy school and feel valued and supported. In general, they work hard, contribute well in lessons and do their best. Where learning is challenging and engages their interest, most sustain interest and concentration well. Many younger pupils work well independently and their input to what and how they learn develops well, but this aspect is less well developed for older pupils. Across the school standards of pupils' behaviour and courtesy are very good. They show respect, care and concern for each other and relate very well to members of staff.

Attendance rates compare well with similar schools and punctuality is good. In line with their age pupils readily take on appropriate responsibilities and they are proud of their school. The school council is well established and represents the views of peers well on issues that affect them. Members have a sound understanding of the processes involved in their election. The council involves members in decision making and is proactive in promoting improvements in the school and the community. Through participation in events with the community pupils develop a range of social and life skills that prepare them well for later life.

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

The school provides a good range of learning experiences in line with the range of pupils' needs. The organisation of learning ensures sufficient time to cover the National Curriculum and religious education. The specific needs of particular groups and individuals are well met through personalised learning programmes.

There are good examples of collaborative, innovative planning across the school. In the Foundation Phase and KS1 much of the learning is developed around broad themes and clearly structured objectives ensure continuity and progression. The contexts for learning are often imaginative and the organisation of groups ensures that pupils are challenged by relevant activities. In KS2 learning pathways linked to skills ladders are being developed across the curriculum through integrated themes. This planning is in the early stages of development. Across the school planning to promote communication, numeracy and ICT skills is well structured, provides appropriate continuity in learning and strategies, such as guided reading, are effective. Provision for Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is good.

The school successfully promotes awareness of sustainable development through a strong focus on environmental education. The pupils' eco committee successfully promotes schemes such as recycling, energy conservation and healthy eating. Awareness of global citizenship is well promoted through links with Italy and France; and an annual multicultural week, culminating in a village carnival, provides pupils with a good awareness of the wider world. However, opportunities for first-hand experience of diversity within society are limited.

Teaching: Good

Teachers have high expectations, manage behaviour very well and successfully promote very good working relationships. They have good subject knowledge and effective teamwork with support staff enhances pupils' learning well. A good range of effective teaching and organisational strategies are used, notably the range of innovative learning activities in the Foundation Phase.

Across the school teaching is good and occasionally excellent. In the best practice it is tailored closely to pupils' different needs and lively learning activities challenge them to achieve highly. The positive emphasis on developing the skills to learn is a strong feature. Lesson planning identifies appropriate objectives and success criteria, but in KS2 these are not always developed fully to promote sufficient challenge across a range of skills.

Procedures for assessment of and for learning are rigorous and information is often used well to adapt subsequent learning. In the Foundation Phase the use of focused day-to-day assessments is very well developed. Across both key stages oral feedback and written comments generally focus well on the learning objective and good use is made of plenary sessions to review progress. A majority of younger pupils readily describe their progress towards their targets and in a few classes older

ones confidently reflect on their achievement and use appropriate vocabulary to explain the systems they use. However, the use of assessment for learning strategies lacks consistency across classes.

Systematic and useful records clearly track pupils' progress and careful analysis of data is used well to inform planning. Good use is made of exemplar materials to help ensure the accuracy of teacher assessments. Reporting arrangements to parents are good.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There is good provision for pupils' health and wellbeing. The school promotes effectively the benefits of healthy living, including the importance of healthy eating and exercise. A good behaviour policy is consistently implemented and perceived as fair by pupils. Arrangements to ensure the safety and security of pupils are appropriate and systematic procedures to promote attendance and monitor punctuality are implemented well. School rules and procedures successfully promote a caring and respectful environment. The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

A well developed personal and social education programme contributes effectively to pupils' personal growth, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All relevant aspects of health, including sex and relationships education and issues of substance misuse and drug prevention, are addressed. There is effective collaboration with specialist agencies to provide appropriate information, guidance and support for individuals where needed. The wellbeing of all pupils, including the very few looked after by the LA, is carefully monitored.

The provision for pupils with ALN is very well targeted for a range of needs. Arrangements comply fully with the SEN Code of Practice. Assessments and records are detailed and effective; these inform the regular review of progress towards targets in individual education plans and also in relation to statements of SEN. Pupils, parents, staff and partner professionals are appropriately involved in planning targets for the next steps of learning. The provision of specialist programmes delivered by skilled support assistants is effective. The arrangements to increase levels of challenge for more able and talented pupils are being developed.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school's inclusive family ethos is an excellent feature that successfully nurtures tolerant and responsible attitudes throughout a vibrant learning community where positive relationships and courtesy are valued. There is a strong emphasis on raising aspirations and challenging stereotypes. High quality policies are consistently implemented to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities and are free from harassment, including bullying. Procedures to promote awareness of diversity and good behaviour and to ensure disability access meet statutory requirements fully. The provision of indoor and outdoor learning resources is impressive.

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The accommodation is clean and well maintained and is broadly sufficient to meet the needs of the number of pupils on roll. Artefacts and displays of pupils' work contribute well to a stimulating environment. The quality of provision for outdoor learning is excellent with most Foundation Phase classes having direct access. The grounds are well managed and the use made of adjacent allotments and woodlands is an exemplar. There is also a good supply of appropriate learning resources, especially in terms of very good quality books and ICT equipment, which meets pupils' needs well.

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

The headteacher provides visionary leadership and is well supported by the senior management team (SMT) in communicating high expectations. The strategic deployment of senior teachers to improve outcomes and provision is very well considered. Staff roles and responsibilities are well defined and the impact of distributed leadership is becoming established. The SMT, which includes a member of support staff, has a clear focus on raising standards and the contribution of skills teams to planning is developing well.

Performance management is implemented in line with requirements and the arrangements include all members of staff. The process is closely linked to improvement initiatives and impacts well on the achievement of SDP targets. A detailed analysis of performance data is used very well to inform organisational strategies and to raise awareness of issues, for example, to improve the performance of more able pupils.

Regular staff and phase meetings effectively promote the dissemination of good practice and leaders have securely established Foundation Phase principles in most classes and in KS2 the skills framework is becoming established. The school's response to local and national priorities is enthusiastic. Effective work is undertaken on transition and the joint moderation of standards. Collaboration with outside agencies is effective and the school was successful in exceeding its targets for attainment in 2010.

The governing body (GB) is well informed, supportive and has a good understanding of the school's performance. The GB is well led, provides a clear sense of direction, contributes fully to self-evaluation and exercises its role as a critical partner effectively.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation procedures are well established, involve the whole staff and draw on a wide range of first hand evidence. Good account is taken of the views of all stakeholders and there is a shared ethos of reflection and improvement in the school. The self-evaluation report is succinct, accurate and well-focused. It identifies strengths and ways forward and is closely linked to the SDP.

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Good account is taken of data and trends in performance, particularly by the SMT that has a sharp focus on the performance of different groups of pupils. The good quality SDP identifies relevant targets linked to self-evaluation and identifies key personnel, costs and timescales. The review of targets in this document is rigorous and identifies the impact of initiatives on standards. This results in further priorities specific to the school being prioritised. Over time the school can show the impact of initiatives on standards and wellbeing; improvement since the last inspection is good.

The headteacher actively promotes the engagement of staff in increasing their professional skills. The school takes an active role in professional learning communities involving the LA and local schools. The focus on pedagogy, provision for Welsh and two modern foreign languages, as well as the sharing of good practice in the Foundation Phase and KS2, impacts well on learning outcomes.

Partnership working: Excellent

The school has excellent partnerships with the community, parents, other schools and educational partners. Nearly all parents indicate very positive views about the school and say they value the approachability of staff.

Activities in partnership with the community are exemplary. The high quality and impact of initiatives to develop the woodland and allotments adjacent to the school, as a community and learning resource, is an excellent feature. The school received the County Environmental Award in recognition of this work in 2009 and 2010.

Parents have a strong voice within the school. In addition to the 'open door policy', opinions are collected systematically during the school's evaluation cycle. The findings inform improvements and the school's response is reported to parents.

Partnership working with LA agencies and local clusters of schools are effective. Teachers collaborate to moderate assessments of pupils' work and the results of working groups impact well on the quality of learning. Effective liaison with pre-school settings and the receiving secondary schools ensures parents are well informed about induction and transfer arrangements. Furthermore, the school plans to develop links with members of its family of schools to share good practice. It has strong links with further education providers and has good systems to support students.

Resource management: Good

The provision of staff is sufficient to teach the curriculum and their deployment impacts well on standards. The strategic management of resources, including time, accommodation and finance, is both efficient and effective.

In line with requirements there is well organised provision for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and the workload agreement. Teachers make effective use of PPA time and the teaching provided in their classes enhances learning experiences, especially in music and physical education.

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The school budget is carefully planned and administered. Every effort is made to provide the best standards of indoor and outdoor accommodation and this is evident in the well organised and maintained provision. The GB works closely with the school to ensure spending decisions provide best value and patterns of provision can be maintained. A very good balance is achieved between costs and the effectiveness of provision.

Performance indicators compare very well with similar schools, high standards are consistently achieved and the quality of educational provision represents good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-nine parents completed the questionnaire and 21 attended the pre-inspection meeting. These parents expressed very positive views about the school. Nearly all say that their children are happy, well behaved and feel safe in school. They indicate teachers are very approachable and feel their children are treated with fairness and respect. All are proud of their children's achievements, express confidence in the staff and say the school is well run. In the questionnaires nearly all strongly agreed or agreed with the statements, but a very few indicated concerns about homework, the quality of information about children's progress, communication and how the school is run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

A large sample of pupils completed the questionnaire and inspectors talked with a representative sample of pupils during the inspection. Nearly all pupils say they feel safe in school and many say the school deals well with any bullying. However, a few say the behaviour of others hinders their work and causes them concern at playtimes. Most say they know who to talk to if they are worried and the school teaches them to keep healthy. Nearly all say they have lots of chances for physical activities, teachers and staff help them learn and they feel they are doing well at school. Most say homework helps improve their work and all say they know what to do and who to ask if they find their work hard. The predominant view of pupils in discussions is that misbehaviour is dealt with fairly and the rewards for good behaviour are effective.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Mr. Michael T. Ridout	Reporting Inspector
Mrs. Helen Smith	Team Inspector
Mr. Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Mrs. Lisa Greenhalgh	Peer Inspector
Mrs. Vanessa McCarthy	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