



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

**Carreghofa County Primary School
Llanymynech
Powys
SY22 6PA**

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Context

Carreghofa County Primary School serves the area of Llanymynech in Powys, very close to the English border. A majority of pupils live locally with a minority of pupils coming from the surrounding area. Nearly 40% of pupils live in England. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and the school describes the area it serves as neither economically advantaged nor disadvantaged. Around 4.6% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is much lower than local and national averages.

There are currently 85 full-time and two part-time pupils on roll organised into four classes. The school admits pupils to the nursery at the age of three. The classes are taught by three full-time and two part-time teachers supported by three full-time and two part-time support staff.

Around 12% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Another pupil receives support for English as an additional language. English is the predominant home language of almost all pupils.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2001. She currently works a four day contract in agreement with the governing body. The deputy headteacher fulfils the position of acting head for the remaining day. There have been a significant number of absences for maternity leave during recent years.

The individual school budget per pupil for Carreghofa County Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,302 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Powys is £14,685 and the minimum is £3,005. Carreghofa County Primary School is 83rd out of the 101 primary schools in Powys 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 overall judgement for the school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make strong progress;
- most pupils have good standards of reading and numeracy;
- most teaching is good or better; and
- nearly all pupils have high levels of wellbeing.

Prospects for improvement

The overall judgement for prospects for improvement is good because;

- the school has a strong culture of improvement;
- there is a well-established cycle of self-evaluation; and
- recent initiatives have led to an improvement in standards.

Recommendations

In order to further improve, the school should:

- R1 raise standards especially in writing;
- R2 improve pupils' confidence and ability to use the Welsh language;
- R3 use assessment more effectively in order to challenge pupils further;
- R4 improve the accuracy of end of key stage teacher assessments; and
- R5 monitor the impact of policies, initiatives and management decisions more rigorously.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils in the nursery/reception class make rapid progress and achieve highly for their age and ability. As they move through the school most pupils make strong progress from their starting points.

Most pupils in the nursery/reception class speak confidently and clearly. They sit and listen very attentively. Many recognise the sounds and names of letters and a few confidently blend letters successfully for the early stage of reading. Most recognise everyday words on signs and labels in both English and Welsh. Almost all pupils copy well and a majority are able to write their names and simple words. A very few can write sentences on their own.

By the end of the Foundation Phase most pupils have good literacy skills. They read clearly and use a range of appropriate strategies to help them understand what they are reading. Most pupils write well for a range of purposes. They spell common words accurately and use suitable punctuation.

Older pupils build successfully on what they have already learned. Most listen well and are attentive in lessons. They talk confidently to adults or in front of their class. By the end of key stage 2 almost all read with clarity and fluency. They read with good expression, and talk confidently about characters and plot and what might happen next in the story. They enjoy reading for pleasure and for information and explain why they like particular authors or styles. Most can find information from reference books or the internet and are aware of the need to be selective in the reliability of what they discover. A few can quickly skim a passage to gain an overall impression of its meaning.

Most pupils write well, but do not always write more extensively in a range of genres and styles. Across both key stages, other than in mathematics, around half of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are poor.

Pupils use their numeracy skills well. For example, younger pupils use data to record their daily intake of different types of food. They discuss their findings confidently showing a clear understanding of the scientific and numerical ideas involved. Older key stage 2 pupils show a very strong understanding of how to interpret graphs. Pupils also achieve good standards in information and communication technology.

Most pupils who receive additional support for their learning make at least the expected progress and a minority do even better. There are insufficient numbers of pupils to make valid judgements about the standards of pupils entitled to free school meals or on the performance of boys and girls.

Pupils are keen and enthusiastic to improve their Welsh in lessons, particularly in the Foundation Phase. They understand the instructions and incidental Welsh used by

staff. However, most pupils do not use Welsh outside of classes unless prompted. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils do not make enough progress to write independently in their own words.

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care because one pupil's results can have a significant impact on overall school performance. Scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and talking to pupils show that current standards are good and are higher than end of key stage assessments suggest.

Most pupils enter the school with skills that are lower than would normally be expected for pupils of their age.

During the last four years, the school's results have been around the average for the local authority and Wales. When compared to the results of similar schools (those with similar percentages of pupils receiving free school meals), the results of pupils in key stage 1 have fluctuated quite widely. Pupils in key stage 2 and more able pupils do not generally attain as well as pupils in similar schools. However, standards of attainment have risen in the last two years.

Compared to pupils in the school's family (those schools which face similar challenges) pupils in key stage 1 generally achieve well above family averages. In key stage 2, the school performs at a level at, or just below, the middle of its family.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a very clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and of the importance of keeping safe. They make appropriate healthy choices at meal times and participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities. Older pupils take responsibility by running the school 'fruit only' tuck-shop, acting as playground buddies, school press-officer or 'chicken warden'.

Nearly all pupils behave well, enjoy school and feel safe. Little bullying occurs and staff deal promptly with any incidents. Pupils are respectful to adults and to each other.

Most pupils are attentive, enthusiastic learners. Many pupils, especially in the nursery/reception class, work well independently, and in groups or teams to solve problems. Pupils are involved in planning what they learn but only about half of the pupils are clear about the targets they have to improve their work.

Pupils have a strong involvement with the local community through, for example, the local farmers market, local church and heritage park. The school council and eco-council play an active part in the life of the school. Representatives are involved effectively in planning school improvements such as providing window blinds in a classroom, and developing the school anti-bullying policy.

Pupils' attendance is around 94%. This places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools.

| |
|---|
| Key Question 2: How good is provision? |
|---|

| |
|-------------|
| Good |
|-------------|

Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which engages all pupils well and makes good use of indoor and outdoor learning. In particular, staff in the nursery/reception class plan a very good range of activities with excellent opportunities for independent learning. In both key stages, teachers generally plan thoroughly to develop pupils' key skills.

Arrangements for pupils in need of additional support are thorough and help them to make good progress. Support for more able pupils is appropriate.

Topic work, such as 'eco-warriors', provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their understanding of recycling, saving energy and minimising waste. The active eco-committee also helps support pupils' understanding of these issues. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to study the wider world, especially through corresponding with children in South Africa and Turkey.

Provision for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills is adequate. The use of Welsh by staff and the extensive use of bilingual signs and notices are beginning to impact successfully on promoting bilingualism. The school provides plenty of worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their historical and cultural understanding of Wales.

The school offers a good range of well attended after-school activities such as cookery, dance and climbing. Most pupils attend residential visits. These help to support effectively pupils learning in school.

Teaching: Adequate

Teaching has many strengths, especially in the nursery/reception class. In all lessons observed, teachers are successful role models for their pupils. They support pupils well and ensure good working relationships. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very effectively and this contributes beneficially to the progress made by pupils.

Where teaching is best, teachers use a range of interesting approaches. They make imaginative use of a range of resources including technology, and they expect pupils to do their best. In a very few lessons, lessons lack pace.

Staff do not always judge accurately how well their pupils are achieving and so some activities do not challenge pupils well enough. They do not consistently mark pupils' work well enough to inform pupils what they need to do to improve.

The school tracks pupils' progress effectively throughout the school and staff use records particularly well to identify pupils needing additional support. For a very few pupils, end of key stage assessments do not accurately reflect the good standards in their work.

The school keeps parents well informed of their children's progress and wellbeing.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Carreghofa School provides a very high quality of care, support and guidance for all its pupils. Provision for health and wellbeing and moral, social and cultural development is good, but provision for pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. Values such as honesty, respect and responsibility have a very high profile within the school.

Staff work effectively with a range of partners such as the police, health and the local authority to support pupils' wellbeing.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Thorough procedures, including individual education plans, prepared jointly by staff, pupils and parents, support pupils effectively and help them make good progress.

The school has appropriate arrangements to challenge pupils whose attendance is poor, but has inconsistent procedures for recording pupils who arrive late.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a caring and supportive community that values all pupils and recognises their achievements. There are appropriate policies, plans and procedures in place to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. These contribute effectively to pupils' good standards of wellbeing.

The quality of the accommodation is good and is well maintained. The indoor and outdoor environments provide good learning opportunities for all pupils. Attractive displays help to support and enhance learning. There is a good range of resources available to meet pupils' needs. However, toilet facilities are not appropriate for Foundation Phase pupils.

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

Leadership: Good

The school now has effective leadership following a long period of instability. The headteacher and deputy headteacher promote a clear vision and commitment to raising standards. Together, they provide good leadership for the school. There have been significant improvements over the last two years since they have worked together. The upward trend in pupils' standards over this period reflects this.

Leaders make good use of performance data to monitor and plan for improvement. The school improvement plan is a well-structured document and clearly sets out the school's priorities. It links effectively to comprehensive performance management arrangements and appropriate professional development opportunities for all staff.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations well. Governors share the vision and sense of direction of the senior management team for the school. The

curriculum committee provides a good level of support and challenge and has a good understanding of the performance of pupils. The governing body acts effectively as a critical friend.

The school responds well to the meeting of national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has a culture of wanting to improve. Initiatives introduced over the last two years have led to a rise in the standards pupils achieve.

All staff and the governing body are appropriately involved in a well-established cycle of self-evaluation that draws on first-hand evidence, including parents' questionnaires, and helps the school plan priorities for improvement. Lesson observations by the headteacher and her deputy provide supportive feedback to staff on the quality of their teaching. Improvement plans have suitable timescales, and resources are allocated appropriately to them but sometimes focus on provision rather than pupil outcomes.

Leaders do not always monitor the impact of initiatives and policies well enough. In these cases, the impact of new developments on how well pupils achieve is not always maximised. This has led to, for example, weaknesses in assessment.

Staff collaborate well with other local schools as part of professional learning communities. Current initiatives include raising standards of pupils' thinking skills and the development of programmes for pupils in need of additional support.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners. For instance, close working with other primary schools in the cluster contributes well to teachers' professional development and pupils' learning. Work with high school staff has helped raise standards in art and science. Many parents support the school by taking groups for design technology, hearing readers or supporting visits and trips. This close partnership with parents has helped to raise pupils' standards of achievement and wellbeing.

The school keeps parents very well informed about the work of the school through regular newsletters and contact.

Transition arrangements with several high schools help pupils move effectively to secondary education.

Resource management: Good

The school has a good range of experienced teachers and teaching assistants. It has worked hard to provide continuity of staffing during a long period of instability. Leaders manage staff in a way that makes the best use of their time, expertise and experience. For example, they make extensive use of support staff to provide effective additional support for individuals and groups of pupils.

Resources are allocated appropriately and the headteacher, with good support from the governing body, monitors the budget carefully.

In view of the good progress made by pupils and the quality of provision and leadership, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care. This is because the results of one pupil can have a significant impact on overall school performance.

Most pupils enter the school with skills that are slightly lower than would normally be expected for pupils of their age.

During the last four years, the school's results have been around the average for the local authority and Wales. When compared to the results of similar schools (those with similar percentages of pupils in receipt of free school meals), results of pupils in key in key stage 1 have fluctuated quite widely. Pupils in key stage 2 have generally attained less well than those in similar schools.

In key stage 1 in 2011 when compared to levels in similar schools, level 2 performance (the expected level for pupils of seven years of age) was in the top 25% for English, mathematics and science. Results have improved for the last two years.

In 2011, key stage 2 results at level 4 (the expected level for pupils of 11 years of age) rose in English and mathematics, but fell in science. The school was in the lowest 25% of schools for English and science and the lower 50% of schools for mathematics. This has been the same pattern for the last two years.

The results of more able pupils at level 3 at the end of key stage 1 and level 5 at the end of key stage 2 are consistently below those of similar schools. In 2011, results were in the lowest 25% of those for similar schools for all subjects at key stage 1 and for science at key stage 2. English and mathematics results in key stage 2 were in the lower 50% of those for similar schools.

Compared to levels in the school's family (those schools which face similar challenges), the results of pupils at key stage 1 are consistently well above family averages. In key stage 2 the school performance level is at, or just below, the middle of its family.

Most pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Pupils in the nursery/reception class make rapid progress and achieve highly for their age and ability.

Most pupils in receipt of additional support for their learning make at least the expected progress and a minority make even better. There are insufficient numbers of pupils to make valid judgements about pupils in receipt of free school meals or on the performance of boys and girls.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Pupils' questionnaire (39 pupils responses)

Almost all pupils feel safe in school, and say that the school helps them learn and make progress and that they know to whom go to in order to get help. Most agree that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and they get enough exercise.

Most girls, but just over two-thirds of boys, agree that homework is helpful. Almost all girls and a majority of boys feel they are doing well in school, believe they have enough resources to do their work, and know whom to turn to if they are worried or upset. Many pupils think that the school deals well with any bullying and believe that children behave well in class or at playtime.

Parents' questionnaire (35 responses)

Almost all parents were very positive about the school. In particular, they say that they are satisfied with the school and that the school is well run. Almost all agree that their child likes school, agree that teaching is good and think that staff treat children with respect. They also think that the school prepares children well for the next stage of their education.

Most parents are pleased that homework builds well on school work, are happy with the range of information they receive from the school, are pleased the quality of additional support, and are happy approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Rick Hawkley | Reporting Inspector |
| Sw Roberts | Team Inspector |
| Justine Barlow | Lay Inspector |
| Claire Lloyd | Peer Inspector |
| Rachel Humphreys | 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 |