



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

**Cwmnedd Primary School
New Street
Glynneath
Neath
SA11 5AA**

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

Cwmnedd Primary School is in the town of Glynneath near Neath, which is situated in the Neath Port Talbot local authority. The school describes most of the area it serves as economically disadvantaged.

There are 172 pupils aged three to eleven years in the school. The school operates on two sites. Nursery and reception aged pupils are educated on the Morfa Glas site, which is approximately half a mile from the main school.

The school identifies 28% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There have been two fixed term exclusions in the past 12 months.

Thirty-five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is higher than the average for the local authority and the all-Wales average.

Nearly all pupils are white British. No pupil speaks Welsh at home and one pupil speaks English as an additional language.

Since the last inspection the school has experienced episodes of instability, with five different acting headteachers over a two year period from 2006 to 2008. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2008 and the last inspection was in 2005. The school has reduced its number of full time teachers from seven to six in the past two years.

The individual school budget per pupil for Cwmnedd Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,480 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £21,718 and the minimum is £2,648. Cwmnedd Primary School is 40th out of the 71 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot 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 current performance of the school is good because:

- by the end of key stage 2 many pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science and in their key skills across the curriculum;
- nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning;
- the school provides a rich and varied range of learning experiences;
- teaching is good; and
- relationships within the school and the wider community are strong.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has clear aims for the school which have resulted in a trend of improvement over the past three years;
- the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is a comprehensive and generally accurate reflection of the school's current position;
- the procedures for self-evaluation are thorough and draw on an appropriate range of first hand evidence; and
- partnerships are strategic and well established and lead to improved outcomes for pupils.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in writing and numeracy in the Foundation Phase;
- R2 ensure that more able pupils are challenged to improve their achievement in English and mathematics;
- R3 engage pupils in self-assessment and ensure consistency of practice in assessment for learning;
- R4 provide more opportunities for staff to share good practice through direct classroom observation; and
- R5 link targets in the school improvement plan to pupil outcomes with clear success criteria.

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

Over recent years, there has been a continuous trend of improvement in pupil achievement at key stage 2. By the end of the key stage, many pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science and the school compares very favourably to similar schools. However, despite recent improvements, pupils' performance in the Foundation Phase is still below the average for the family of schools. Pupils' standards in the Foundation Phase in writing and numeracy are too low. Generally, when compared to the situation in similar schools, too few more able pupils achieve high levels of attainment in English and mathematics in both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

In the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils settle quickly into school routines and become confident, enthusiastic learners. Most make good progress in speaking, listening and reading. However, pupils do not write well enough independently for a range of purposes across the curriculum.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Most pupils take an active part in discussions. They confidently develop their ideas and express opinions clearly. Most pupils read fluently at an appropriate level and are beginning to develop their higher order reading skills. They write well for a range of purposes, both in English lessons and across the curriculum. However, many pupils have limited strategies to spell unknown words.

In mathematics, many older pupils develop a good range of strategies to solve numerical problems. Nearly all pupils make very good progress in developing their information and communication technology skills and apply these skills effectively across the curriculum.

Many pupils with additional learning needs make good and sometimes very good progress in developing their reading and writing skills. Pupils with individual education plans receive well-targeted support, which ensures that they make good progress in relation to their targets.

Across the school, nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills in Welsh. Most pupils can follow a range of instructions and are enthusiastic about learning Welsh. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils speak confidently to convey personal information and are developing their ability to write independently in Welsh.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and the importance of an active lifestyle. Many pupils use the breakfast club and regularly buy from the fruit tuck shop. Nearly all pupils enjoy school life, feel safe and are proud of their school.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are engaged and attentive in class. They work very successfully together and are keen to support each other. Nearly all pupils are courteous and well behaved. However, pupils' ability to set their targets to improve their own learning is in the early stages of development.

The school attendance rate has improved over recent years and is in the highest 25% when compared to that of similar schools.

Pupil representation is a strong feature of school life. The school council is a very successful forum and pupils express their opinions well. Pupils' views are valued and their suggestions for improving the school environment have been acted upon in the school improvement plan. Pupils raise funds through recycling activities and manage the proceeds from these activities in their own bank account. School councillors act maturely and all members of the school are canvassed regularly for their opinions.

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

Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a rich and varied range of learning experiences through a broad and balanced curriculum. These engage and stimulate most pupils and enable them to build successfully on their previous learning. However, planning to challenge more able pupils is underdeveloped, particularly in English and mathematics.

The school generally plans well to develop pupils' skills across all areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to use their skills are often embedded successfully into learning experiences. In key stage 2, provision to develop pupils' information and communication technology and writing skills across a range of subjects is very good. However, in the Foundation Phase, a lack of planned opportunities constrains pupils' ability to write independently and at length for different purposes.

The school has good provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship. This includes making good use of links with the local community and places in other parts of the world. As a result of successfully promoting sustainability, the school has achieved the eco-schools 'Green Flag' award for the third time.

The school plans provision for the Welsh dimension well. This is having a positive impact on pupils' standards. The Welsh language is promoted very well through topic work. As a result, pupils have a good bank of relevant vocabulary and are able to make links to other areas of the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality and the history and culture of Wales through educational visits.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is generally good across the school. Most teaching ensures that pupils are motivated and engaged. Many teachers have up to date subject and professional

knowledge and use a good range of approaches and resources to develop the skills and understanding of pupils. They ask open-ended questions and employ effective behaviour management strategies. Most teachers make very good use of additional adult support and this impacts positively on pupils' progress. However, in a few lessons, pupils are not sufficiently challenged, the pace is too slow and there is an over-reliance on teacher instruction.

Teachers mark work regularly and their comments generally relate to the learning intentions. However, assessment for learning strategies are not consistently applied and do not enable all pupils to effectively engage in self and peer-assessment. As a result, pupils' ability to improve their own work is underdeveloped.

Tracking systems effectively monitor progress and wellbeing. Tracking data is used well to identify groups for support and intervention. As a result, the needs of pupils with additional learning needs are met well, but teachers do not always provide well enough for more able pupils.

Reports to parents meet statutory requirements and provide useful information regarding pupil progress and the next steps in learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a very well ordered environment with excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are respectful of each other and adults. Provision for pupils' social and emotional needs is good and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Assemblies effectively develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school is also successful in promoting the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

There is an effective whole school approach to behaviour management, which is consistently applied, and this impacts positively on pupils' behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own class rules and are well supported in managing their own emotions. Very good systems to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality are having a positive impact through close links with the local authority's education welfare officer.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Arrangements for the early identification and monitoring of pupils with additional learning needs are very good. The implementation of positive support strategies and intervention schemes ensures that pupils' individual learning needs are met well. Learning support assistants provide good quality support, which impacts positively on the progress that pupils make. Individual education plans are child-friendly and ensure that pupils and their parents are involved in assessing progress made.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community with a positive ethos. There are clear procedures and policies in place to ensure equality of provision and opportunity for all.

The school provides a stimulating learning environment. There are informative, creative and colourful displays of pupils' work that reinforce their learning and celebrate their achievements. Welsh displays are interactive and are used well to aid learning. Internal accommodation in the Foundation Phase has been developed in a very creative and resourceful way. The indoor learning environment in both Foundation Phase classes is excellent. However, the outdoor environment is less well developed and is underused.

Good use is made of additional external information and communication technology facilities in the local community. Overall, the school has a good range of resources that are well matched to the needs and interests of pupils.

The main buildings are very clean and maintained to a good standard. However, some areas on the exterior of the building require renewal. During the inspection, two health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the school.

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

Leadership: Good

The headteacher has clear aims for the school, which have resulted in a trend of improvement over the past three years. He is well supported in his drive for improvement by the governing body and all staff. Relationships within the school are secure and based on mutual respect and trust. This creates a positive working environment.

Roles are sensibly distributed and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Lines of accountability are clear. Job descriptions are in place for all staff and relate well to their individual responsibilities. However, not all senior managers receive designated leadership time and this impacts on their ability to drive forward improvement. Regular senior leadership team and staff meetings provide good opportunities for all staff to contribute to the strategic direction of the school. Performance management arrangements for teachers are appropriate and usually link well to school development priorities.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations. Governors share the headteacher's vision for the school, support the school well and have a good awareness of the school's current position and future priorities. Over the past few years, governors have worked well with the headteacher to improve the school's reputation in the local community.

The school is making good progress in introducing initiatives that meet local and national priorities such as improving boys' reading and developing pupils' social and emotional wellbeing.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation report is a comprehensive and generally accurate reflection of its current position. Procedures for self-evaluation are thorough and draw on an appropriate range of first-hand evidence. Data is analysed effectively

and good attention is paid to trends in performance and progress over time. Although the headteacher monitors the quality of teaching on an informal basis, senior leaders do not formally evaluate the quality of teaching regularly enough.

Outcomes from self-evaluation are generally used well to set future priorities. As a result, the school has been particularly successful in raising pupils' standards in writing at key stage 2 and improving behaviour.

The school improvement plan is understood by all staff and they are committed to raising standards. Resources and responsibilities to do this are allocated appropriately. However, success criteria are not always quantitative enough to accurately assess the impact of actions taken.

Teachers have benefitted from a good range of professional development opportunities. For example, teachers in the Foundation Phase have established a successful professional learning community within the school. This has resulted in improved provision and excellent internal learning environments. Key stage 2 teachers have not had enough opportunities to visit each-others classrooms or learn from the good practice that exists in the school. This has led to some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Partnership working: Good

The school actively develops strategic partnerships with local businesses and the community. These help to provide a broad range of additional experiences for pupils. For example, the partnership with Glynneath Adult Training Centre has improved pupils' standards in information and communication technology. The centre also funds a gardener to work with pupils to grow vegetables, and this impacts positively on pupils' wellbeing.

The partnership with a children's charity is an excellent example of the school, parents and the charity working jointly to improve the behaviour and self-esteem of pupils at risk of exclusion.

Transition and moderation arrangements with the high school are good. There are also good arrangements for the sharing of financial resources. For example, local schools jointly fund an attendance improvement officer. The schools also share expertise between staff. For example, a learning support assistant from Cwmnedd Primary has trained secondary staff on implementing a reading intervention programme. This helps to ensure continuity for pupils when they transfer to secondary education.

Resource management: Good

The school has a suitable number of staff and deploys them effectively. It identifies and meets the needs of teachers through appropriate performance management procedures. Learning support assistants' training needs are well met through additional development sessions. Teachers make effective use of planning and preparation time. This has helped to improve the use of assessment to inform planning.

The school manages its budget well. It has taken appropriate action to remedy a small budget deficit. Leaders and managers adjust spending efficiently in response to changing circumstances. Spending decisions link appropriately to school development priorities.

In view of the good outcomes achieved by many pupils by the end of key stage 2, the high standard of care, support and guidance and the efficient management of available resources, the school overall provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

At key stage 1, when compared to the relative performance of schools with similar percentages of free school meals, pupils' performance, at the expected level for seven years of age (level 2), is generally in the lower 50% for the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination), English, mathematics and science. In the core subject indicator, English and science, pupils' performance has been in the lowest 25% for two of the past four years.

Pupils' performance at the expected level, when compared to performance levels in the family of schools, is consistently below the family average in the core subject indicator and English. It is usually below in mathematics and science. In 2010-2011, too few pupils achieved the expected level in all three core subjects.

More able pupils' performance at the higher level (level 3) is generally in the lower 50% when compared to the performance of pupils in schools with similar percentages of free school meals. Pupils' performance at the higher level is generally below the average for the family in English and science and consistently below in mathematics.

In key stage 2, there has been an improving trend in pupils' performance at the expected level for eleven years of age (level 4), in the core subject indicator and all three subjects. For the past two years, pupils' performance in the core subject indicator, English and mathematics has been in the upper 25% when compared to relative performance of schools with similar percentages of free school meals. In science, pupils' performance has been in the higher 50% for three years and the highest 25% in 2010-2011. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils achieve good standards. Over time, but especially in the past two years, pupils' performance at the expected level in the core subject indicator and all three subjects compares well to the performance levels of pupils in the family of schools.

Although there is no trend of improvement, more able pupils' performance at the higher level (level 5) has been in the upper 50% for two of the past three years when compared to that of schools with similar percentages of free school meals. Pupils' performance at the higher level in English, mathematics and science is generally satisfactory when compared to the average for the family of schools.

At key stage 1, boys consistently perform less well than girls in English and the core subject indicator. The gender gap is greater than that of the family, the local authority and the all-Wales average. No boy achieved the higher level in English, mathematics or science in 2010-2011.

At key stage 2, there is generally no significant gender difference at the expected level in oracy and reading. However, in two of the last three years there was a significant difference, in excess of 40%, in writing. In mathematics there is no discernible gender trend. In science, boys have performed better than girls in four of

the last five years.

There is no significant difference between the performance of the group of pupils entitled to free school meals and those not entitled to free school meals.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Pupil questionnaire outcomes (76 pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire)

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. In addition, they know what to do if they are finding work hard and believe that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. As a result, most pupils think they are doing well at school.

Nearly all pupils feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that they have lots of opportunities to get regular exercise. Most pupils feel that they have enough books and equipment and that homework helps them to improve their work in school.

Most pupils feel that the school deals well with any bullying and that other pupils behave well at play time and lunchtime. However, a few pupils feel that the behaviour of others interferes with their work in class.

Overall, most of these views are generally in line with the views of pupils in other schools in Wales. However, more pupils in Cwmnedd Primary express positive views about the behaviour of other pupils.

Parent questionnaire outcomes (56 parents completed the questionnaires and nine parents attended the parents' meeting)

Overall, all parents are satisfied with the school and feel it is well run. All parents state that their child likes school, feels safe and is making good progress.

Nearly all parents think that teaching is good and say that their child was helped well to settle into school when they first started. They feel that staff expect their child to work hard and that the homework given builds well on what their child learns in school. All parents think that their child is encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise.

Most parents feel that staff treat all children fairly and with respect and that the school helps children to become more mature and take on responsibilities. Most parents think their child receives appropriate support in relation to their individual learning needs and that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their education. They are satisfied with the range of trips and visits that the school provides.

A very few parents express negative views about pupils' behaviour in the school and do not feel well informed about their child's progress. Most parents understand the school's complaints procedure and feel comfortable approaching the school with any problems, questions or suggestions.

Overall, nearly all of these views are in line with, or slightly better than, the views of parents in other schools across Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Liz Miles	Reporting Inspector
Anwen Griffith	Team Inspector
Deirdre Emberson	Lay Inspector
Richard Lloyd	Peer Inspector
Mr A Herbert (Headteacher)	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