



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

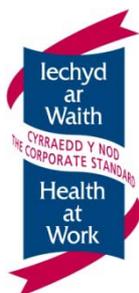
A report on

**Glynhafod Junior School
Glynhafod Street
Cwmaman
Aberdare
CF44 6LD**

Date of inspection: December 2010

by

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



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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 2011: 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

Glynhafod Junior School is situated in the village of Cwmaman, near Aberdare. The school was built in 1911 and serves the local area, which is designated as a Community First area by the Welsh Assembly Government.

There are 83 pupils aged 7–11 years on roll. The pupils are taught in four classes. The intake of pupils represents the full ability range and contains sizeable groups of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The proportion of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals is 29%. This is well above local and national averages. Currently there is one pupil who is being 'looked after' by the local authority.

English is the predominant language for all pupils. There are currently no pupils requiring support for English as an additional language and no pupils use Welsh as a first language.

Around 36% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) and one pupil has a formal statement of special educational needs (SEN).

The school has achieved the following awards: Basic Skills Quality Mark; BECTA Award for Information, Communication Technology; Investors in People; Healthy Schools; and the Eco Silver Award.

The headteacher has been in post since April 2010 having previously been the deputy headteacher of the school. The school has an acting deputy headteacher.

The 2010-11 individual school budget per pupil for Glynhafod Junior School is £3,559, which compares to a maximum of £9,064 and a minimum of £2,992 for primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT). The school has the 49th highest budget out of the 86 schools in RCT.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress during their time at the school;
- teaching is good or better in all lessons and pupils benefit from an interesting and varied curriculum;
- the school provides high-quality care, support and guidance for the pupils which results in high standards of wellbeing; and
- the school's partnerships with the community are very well developed and contribute significantly to pupils' development of good social and life skills.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher provides clear leadership, direction and sense of purpose to the school;
- leaders and managers have successfully developed procedures for effective self-evaluation; and
- all staff work together well as a team in order to ensure the best outcomes for pupils.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, Glynhafod Junior School needs to:

R1 continue to address the gap between boys' and girls' attainment;

R2 improve standards of Welsh language skills, especially in upper key stage 2;

R3 strengthen the partnership with parents;

R4 continue to improve attendance; and

R5 further develop the role of the school council.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well in work across the curriculum.

Over the past three years there has been an upward trend in pupils' performance and, as a result, the school consistently performs better than schools in similar circumstances. The results, based on the combined subjects of English, mathematics and science, are higher than the local authority averages and place the school in the top three of its family of schools.

Within its family of schools Glynhafod has the highest percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in English and mathematics and the third highest percentage in science. However, girls perform better than boys in all subjects at both level 4 and level 5 and this difference in performance is greater than that for its family of schools.

Pupils with SEN do well during their time in the school, making good progress in relation to their starting point.

Pupils settle quickly when they transfer from Cwmaman Infants and become increasingly confident independent learners. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils have good recall of previous learning and use and apply their skills effectively in a range of situations. This equips pupils well for the next stage of their education in secondary school.

Most pupils communicate clearly and listen attentively. Many pupils read fluently and write at length in a range of forms. They use a variety of styles, punctuate their work correctly and use descriptive language to enhance their writing. This enables them to work well across a range of different curriculum subjects and contributes to their good levels of attainment.

Pupils also use their numeracy skills effectively to solve practical everyday problems across a range of subjects.

Pupils' information and communications technology (ICT) skills are good overall and are used throughout the curriculum. Most pupils demonstrate good knowledge of a range of appropriate software and hardware. Younger pupils use a suitable program to design pulleys for a design and technology project and, in Year 6, pupils devise spreadsheets to calculate the length of reigns of Tudor monarchs.

Throughout the school almost all pupils work together well in pairs and groups. In Year 3, pupils discuss their ideas and agree on how best to care for a pet. Older pupils work in groups discussing similes and metaphors that could be included in their descriptive writing.

Although most pupils in Years 3 and 4 respond appropriately to instructions and questions, few use incidental Welsh unprompted. Pupils' oral and reading skills are not as good as the standard of their written work in Welsh at the end of key stage 2.

Wellbeing: Good

The good standard of pupils' wellbeing is a strong feature of the school.

All pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to seek help with any problems. There is an emphasis in the school on respect for each other and, through appropriate training, pupils learn to manage conflict themselves. They have a good understanding of what it is to be healthy and the importance of exercise.

Most parents and pupils understand the importance of good attendance and there are thorough policies and procedures in place to encourage it. However, despite the school's best efforts, attendance is 92.1%, which is below national figures.

Pupils enjoy their roles as school councillors and feel that their suggestions are taken account of. However, their role could be further developed through participation in a wider range of activities and decision-making opportunities.

Most pupils are enthusiastic and attentive learners. They apply themselves well in lessons and are actively engaged in learning activities. All pupils behave very well showing increasingly mature attitudes to learning as they progress through the school.

Most pupils increasingly take responsibility for their learning by setting relevant learning targets to improve their work. They have well-developed independent learning skills and co-operate well with each other. Through the effective range of community partnerships and involvement in the Intergenerational project with the local care home for the elderly, most pupils have well-developed social and life skills.

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

Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a broad range of learning activities that are stimulating and effectively engage pupils.

Teachers plan interesting and appropriate activities for pupils according to their level of ability, with a good level of challenge for more able pupils.

Withdrawal groups to support pupils with literacy, numeracy and personal and social needs contribute significantly to developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem, resulting in an improvement in pupils' attainment.

Appropriate personalised programmes of work are in place for pupils with specific learning needs.

The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular activities and visits that enrich pupils' experiences. These complement the school curriculum well and promote pupils' wellbeing and social and life skills.

Teachers' planning identifies both subject and key skills to be taught and lessons provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop and apply these skills.

There is a strong Welsh ethos at the school and schemes of work make appropriate provision for *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*. Work on the local area and visits to places such as Llancaiach Fawr add to pupils' understanding of Welsh history. Although pupils make good progress in their Welsh language skills in lower key stage 2, there are limited opportunities for them to maintain progress as they move through the school.

The school succeeds well in promoting education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The eco committee works hard within the school to draw attention to energy saving and recycling. The school grounds are used to good effect and each class has its own garden to grow vegetables and flowers. Events developed in partnership with the community, such as the Caribbean carnival, give pupils a greater understanding of their place in the wider world.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good or better in all classes. Teachers use an effective range of strategies to ensure pupil engagement and motivation. They ask thoughtful and challenging questions that develop pupils' thinking skills.

Teachers' detailed planning builds well on previous learning. Teachers evaluate their lessons thoroughly and ensure that all pupils make good progress. They provide for the learning of less able pupils and they plan challenging activities that extend the more able.

All teachers ensure that pupils are aware of the learning intentions of lessons and give helpful oral feedback to them throughout each session. Teachers' marking is consistently good throughout the school. It informs pupils of how well they have done and identifies the next steps in their learning. Pupils regularly assess their own learning and have a good understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve. Adult support is well-focussed and makes a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

The school has clear and robust arrangements for assessing pupils and tracking their progress. Teachers make good use of standardised tests, as well as using their own assessments, to set individual learning targets for pupils that are challenging and achievable.

Good moderation and standardisation processes, in partnership with the Blaengwawr cluster of schools, ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Good use is made of assessment evidence to plan and target appropriate additional support for pupils who need it. More able and talented pupils are also clearly identified and their progress is effectively monitored. Assessment for learning is well-embedded

throughout the school and is having a good impact on pupils' progress and standards.

Parents and carers are well-informed about the progress of their children through regular consultations, reports and newsletters.

Care, support and guidance: Good

A strength of the school is the very good level of care, support and guidance offered to its pupils. The pupils feel valued and safe within the school's nurturing environment.

The school promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development well. As a result, all pupils show respect and consideration for each other. The celebration assemblies and consistent use of positive praise and encouragement effectively build pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

The school has achieved phase four of the Healthy Schools Award, which is reflected in the high quality provision for health and wellbeing. The school makes effective use of outside agencies to provide individual support for pupils' learning and care needs.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. The anti-bullying policy is ably supported by pupils through its group of trained playground peace-keepers.

Teachers and support staff work closely as a team to reduce barriers to learning and provide effective learning support for pupils. Early diagnosis provides pupils with timely support that is appropriate to their needs. The school collaborates well with other agencies to draw up suitable learning programmes. Groups of vulnerable pupils are identified using clear criteria and the school provides targeted support for these through their 'sunflower' group. Individual education plans for pupils are reviewed on a regular basis, but not all parents meet with teachers to discuss and agree the learning targets for their children.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a close community where pupils' learning is nurtured in a calm and caring atmosphere and all pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. Staff give particular emphasis to building pupils' independence, recognising individual pupils' achievements and raising their aspirations.

The curriculum is fully accessible to all pupils, regardless of their individual needs, gender, race or background. Support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' experiences in the school.

The school uses its accommodation effectively and the classrooms and outside areas are attractive and well-maintained learning environments. Full use is made of a range of resources in the community to supplement and enrich the curriculum. For example, the school has worked with the Aman Valley Conservation Association to develop the class allotments.

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

Good

Leadership: Good

The recently appointed headteacher has successfully developed, in strong partnership with the staff, governors, pupils and parents, a shared vision for the school. All staff implement this vision of working together to achieve the best through a strong caring ethos. The headteacher's purposeful leadership style enables the staff to work as an effective team and they respond well to their distributed leadership roles. Performance management arrangements further aid school improvement and reflect school priorities.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations conscientiously and has a good understanding of how Glynhafod school is performing. Governors are all involved in working with curriculum leaders in evaluating subject strengths and weaknesses and are therefore able to act as critical friends and challenge the school, when appropriate.

Local and national priorities are developing well. For example, the school has successfully introduced the Skills Framework and Assessment for Learning strategies. It has recently achieved the BECTA quality mark that recognises schools for their achievements in reaching a standard of maturity in their use of ICT.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation process is thorough and involves all staff, governors, parents and pupils. Staff and governors use a wide range of appropriate evidence as part of an ongoing process. This includes classroom observations, monitoring pupils' work and listening to learners. Staff and governors use this evidence as a basis for a school development plan that focuses on appropriate areas for improvement. This thorough approach has led to improvements in standards.

The school is developing into a strong learning community and there is a healthy culture of collaboration between staff, who often reflect on and evaluate their own practice. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing. Staff also collaborate extensively with other local schools in the cluster, and this benefits teaching and curriculum development.

Partnership working: Good

The school has successfully established a range of very strong partnerships with the community it serves, the local authority, cluster schools and support services. These partners visit the school regularly and contribute significantly to pupils' wellbeing, personal and social development and learning outcomes. The school has benefited greatly through collaborating with schools included in a 'Raise attainment and individual standards in education' (RAISE) project and this has led to an improvement in pupils' oracy and writing.

Good liaison, communication, transfer of data and joint training events with the feeder infant school and secondary school ensure effective continuity and progression for pupils.

Parents receive good information from the school and value its 'open door policy'. However, not all parents are actively engaged in working together with the school for the benefit of their children.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its budget well and links spending decisions closely to the priorities identified in the School Development Plan. There is a good range of appropriate learning resources and a generous level of staffing. Very effective use is made of support staff. Teachers make good use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and this is well-managed.

The environment for learning is well-organised and attractive, and builds on the Foundation Phase approach used in the feeder infant school. The school is further developing the outdoors in order to broaden and expand the curriculum.

In view of the good standards of pupils' attainment and achievement and the high quality of the care and experiences available, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Eighty-two pupils completed the questionnaires. All feel safe at school and know to whom to talk if they are worried or upset. Nearly all think that the school deals well with bullying and that other children behave well, both in the classroom and at playtime and lunchtime. All pupils agree that there are lots of opportunities at school for them to get regular exercise and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. Nearly all children think that they are doing well at school and that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. All pupils think that the teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress and that they have enough books and resources to do their work.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Seven parents completed the questionnaires. Overall, the responses were very positive and all parents are satisfied with the school. They agree that the school is well run, that their children like the school and that teaching is good. Many believe that their children are making good progress and that homework builds well on what their children learn. All state that there is a good range of activities, including trips or visits and that staff expect their children to work hard and to do their best. Many feel that they are kept well-informed about their children's progress and that their children are making good progress at school. All think that children are treated fairly and with respect and that they are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. Many are satisfied that their children receive appropriate additional support in relation to their particular individual needs and that pupils behave well at school. All consider their children to be well-prepared for moving on to the next school and that the school helps their children to become more mature and take on responsibility.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Lynda Newton AI	Reporting Inspector
Maldwyn Pryse	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Linda Smith	Peer Inspector
Christian Coole	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 Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

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