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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Llwynypia Primary School
School Terrace
Tonypandy
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF40 2HL**

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Dorothy Morris

under contract to

**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

Llwynypia Primary School caters for pupils aged three to eleven years old and is located in the village of Llwynypia near Tonypany. It is maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. There are 228 pupils (full time equivalent) on roll. School numbers have increased a little since the last inspection.

Most of the pupils who attend the school come from the immediate area. The area is described as being one of the most deprived in Wales as measured by the Welsh Index of Deprivation. Twenty six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Pupils attending the school represent the full range of ability. Currently, 61 pupils are designated as having special educational needs (SEN). No pupil has a statement of SEN. Nearly all pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language.

The school has achieved many awards. It is an accredited Healthy School, and has achieved Eco School and Fairtrade School status. It has met the standards to gain Investors in People accreditation and has also achieved the Basic Skills Quality Standard.

The current headteacher was appointed in 2008.

The individual school budget per pupil for Llwynypia Primary School is £2951 which compares with a maximum of £9525 and a minimum of £2553 for primary schools in the local authority. Llwynypia Primary School has the 90th highest budget per pupil out of the 116 primary schools in the authority

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress during their period in the school;
- teaching is mainly good;
- the school provides a range of good learning experiences for pupils;
- the care and wellbeing of pupils is very well promoted;
- there is a welcoming ethos and the school functions effectively as a happy and close community;
- the school has very effective links with all its partners.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- trends in school performance show an upward trend in many areas;
- the headteacher has a clear vision for the further development of the school based on a very good understanding of its needs;
- staff work effectively as a team;
- new initiatives are improving aspects of learning and raising standards;
- the staff, governing body and the local authority work very effectively in partnership to develop the school further.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to;

- R1 build on the improvements in standards, including boys' achievements generally and the percentage of more able pupils achieving level 3;
- R2 extend the good practice in teaching and learning more consistently across the school;
- R3 further embed the use of assessment processes, including assessment for learning strategies, in guiding teaching and learning; and
- R4 strengthen curriculum planning further to develop pupils' key skills progressively across the school.

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
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Standards: Good

Many children enter school with skills below those normally expected for children of their age. Most pupils make good progress in their learning during their time in the school.

Over the last four years, pupils' results at seven years of age as measured by the end of key stage 1 (KS1) teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science show some fluctuations but are above those of the local authority, national and the family of schools. When compared to similar schools nationally, based on entitlement to free school meals, the overall results place the school in the upper 50% in most years.

Over the last four years, pupils' overall results at eleven years of age at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) as measured by teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science show an improvement and are consistently above the averages for the family of schools. Outcomes are more varied when compared with local authority and national averages. When compared to similar schools nationally, based on entitlement to free school meals, the results overall range between the lowest 25% and the upper 50%.

In relation to its family of schools, Llwynypia Primary, as the most challenged, performs particularly well and is the second best performing school in both key stages.

The percentage of pupils achieving above the expected level (level 3) at the end of KS1 is generally below the local authority, national and family of schools in English, mathematics and science. In relation to overall outcomes, there is a substantial gap between the achievement of boys and girls particularly in relation to boys' writing skills.

At the end of KS2, the percentage of pupils achieving above the expected level (level 5) shows an upward trend and is above the averages for the local authority, national and family of schools. Girls perform particularly well and their results are above comparative data. Boys' outcomes are above the average for the family of schools in all subjects but trends fluctuate when compared to national and local authority averages particularly in mathematics and science.

Most pupils with additional learning needs or in receipt of free school meals make good progress and achieve well relative to their age and stage of development.

Pupils listen well and speak confidently in different situations. Within the wide range of pupils' abilities, most read and write competently. Many boys' writing skills, however, demonstrate a limited range of vocabulary and an insecure grasp of syntax and spelling patterns. Overall, more able pupils' reading and writing skills are good.

Pupils use the key skills of communication, number and information and communications technology (ICT) skills appropriately in tasks across the subjects but many do not develop and improve them progressively as they move through the key stages. Children in the Foundation Phase and Year 6 pupils in particular make good use of their thinking and problem-solving strategies in many areas of learning and their skills of independent learning develop well. These skills develop less consistently in other classes.

Pupils' Welsh language skills are good overall. Across the school, most pupils understand and respond well to a range of simple questions and instructions during lessons, collective worship and generally during the day. As they move through the school, most pupils make appropriate use of their developing reading and writing skills.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning and are proud of their achievements. They work effectively with others in groups and in pairs and strive well to complete tasks to the best of their ability. In discussion, they state that they feel safe in school, are fully involved in school activities and that they are given all the support they need by staff. They display a positive attitude towards healthy eating and understand the importance of keeping physically fit. Pupils benefit from the effective links with the community gaining good social skills for life outside school.

Pupils' attendance rates for the past academic year at 92.1% were above the local authority average but are more uneven generally when compared with similar schools. Levels of unauthorised absences have fallen as a result of positive and effective action taken by the school. The majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

The school's very good focus on promoting pupils' wellbeing is reflected positively in many aspects of their personal development. Standards of behaviour are very good. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff and visitors. They benefit from the variety of opportunities to undertake responsibilities, such as head boy, head girl, prefects and monitors, and undertake their duties conscientiously and effectively. Membership of the school council and the eco committee develops their confidence and decision making skills and enables them to contribute well to decision making within the school.

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

The school offers pupils a wide range of good learning experiences within a broad and balanced curriculum. Overall, teachers plan interesting activities for pupils at an appropriate level for their ability. Planning to meet the requirements of a skills based curriculum is developing but provision lacks the consistency to develop all the key skills progressively across the school.

Overall, Welsh language development and the Welsh dimension are planned effectively and the school development plan appropriately identifies areas for further development. There is a good focus on promoting positive attitudes towards the Welsh language through activities, displays and the incidental use of Welsh throughout the day. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality, and the history and culture of Wales through the curriculum, specific projects and community celebrations.

The school has good provision to develop pupils' understanding of the need to care for the environment and the diverse world in which they live. It successfully promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship and empowers them to take responsibility for many school wide, sustainability initiatives.

Teaching: Good

Most teaching is effective and provides good learning opportunities in a range of forms. In depth questioning extends pupils' understanding in a positive learning environment. Many teachers use technology well to enhance the learning. Adult support in most lessons is used effectively and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, there is a lack of challenge and expectation for more able pupils. Pupils identified as needing additional support are supported very well; both in class and withdrawal groups.

All teaching staff including support staff model language accurately and use effective strategies to keep nearly all pupils on task. Overall, teachers have good learning relationships with pupils and manage behaviour effectively.

Pupils' progress in learning is appropriately assessed and pupil tracking at individual and group level is in place. The use of assessment outcomes and of assessment for learning strategies in planning tasks and involving pupils in their own learning is a developing element of the provision.

Teachers and support staff work alongside pupils and offer good oral feedback. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is generally effective and in best practice shows clearly what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. Targets are set for cohorts at the beginning of the academic year and actual achievement carefully recorded at the end. Pupils also set their personal targets and most can discuss sensibly how well they are doing.

Reports to parents are clear and informative. Parents and carers feel very well-informed about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing, and to promote good life skills. The school has very extensive links with a range of specialist services which provide valuable guidance and support for staff, pupils, parents and carers. The school fully meets safeguarding arrangements.

Good learning experiences effectively promote pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are well established rules and practices which promote very good behaviour, which supports effective learning.

There are very effective procedures in place for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs. The additional support is closely matched to pupils' individual needs and is of a good quality. Learning support assistants, additional practitioners and the language support teacher are deployed effectively. Individual education plans are of good quality. They are regularly reviewed and pupils' progress is closely monitored. Both parents/carers and pupils are involved in discussing and setting targets.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a warm, caring, supportive environment. Its ethos clearly reflects its inclusive nature and ensures that all pupils are valued and treated equally. The school provides good guidance to pupils on understanding, showing respect for, and accepting diversity.

The school building, although old, has been very effectively refurbished and provides a spacious, clean, stimulating learning environment for pupils and staff. There is good use of the accommodation and learning facilities. The very extensive school grounds are being developed to support a range of curricular activities. The wide range of resources is used effectively to enrich the curriculum and support learning. Displays of pupils' work and involvement in a range of projects further enhance the learning environment.

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

The headteacher provides very effective leadership. She has a clear vision for the further development of the school based on a thorough understanding of its needs. There is good use of whole school and comparative data as part of a continuing process of monitoring performance. The headteacher and senior management team have developed a very strong ethos of teamwork and partnership where everyone feels valued. All share a commitment to school improvement and wellbeing.

Governors are very well led by an experienced chairperson who demonstrates exceptional commitment to the school and to pupils' wellbeing. Governors are well informed about the school's provision and are proactive in securing improvements. They fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. The extensive school refurbishment programme is a particularly good example of effective collaboration between the headteacher, governing body and the local authority. This good practice has been advocated appropriately to other schools.

The school gives good attention to local and national priorities. It has successfully introduced the Foundation Phase and undertakes good work in sustainability and global citizenship across the school. The headteacher has effectively maximised the expertise available to the school by establishing good partnerships with a variety of external agencies.

Performance management is well established and objectives are linked closely to raising standards and effectively identify whole school development and training needs.

Improving quality: Good

The school has well established self-evaluation procedures for ensuring quality improvement. The headteacher's attention to seeking and responding to the views of stakeholders is a very good feature. Responses are considered and utilised effectively in improving provision for pupils. The school self-evaluation report is a comprehensive document offering a balanced and honest evaluation of standards and provision.

The role of the subject leaders is well established. They know their subjects well and effectively monitor provision in subject areas with a focus on continual school improvement. They prepare detailed reports and action plans which are monitored against the targets set.

The school development plan is closely linked to the outcomes of the self-evaluation process. The senior management team and subject leaders set priorities for improvement identifying clear targets and success criteria. There is appropriate evaluation of the impact of strategies on pupil standards, outcomes and provision. Progress is reported to governors.

Professional learning communities are being developed within the school enabling staff to share their professional knowledge and expertise to promote consistency and share best practice across the school. The school works effectively with other schools in developing professional learning communities as a cluster focussing particularly successfully on aspects such as pupil wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents, the community, the local authority and other schools are a strength of the school. Transition links between the playgroup and the school are very effective. Transition plans agreed with the cluster of schools and local secondary school enable pupils to be well prepared for the next stage in their education. This work includes regular meetings to discuss and moderate pupil progress and attainment. There are constructive links with local schools to share good practice and with a range of local agencies which contribute effectively to the curriculum.

The school is at the heart of the community and staff, governors and pupils play an active part in community events. The school has worked closely with members of the community to mark the recent centenary of the Tonypandy riots.

Resource management: Good

The school successfully balances the effectiveness of provision against costs and has been able to maintain a high staff pupil ratio as a school priority. This has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and on improving standards. Teachers and support staff are deployed well and work very effectively alongside the teachers. The school meets the requirements for workforce remodelling. The appropriate allocation of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is used effectively to support the curriculum.

The budget is carefully administered to ensure that pupils have sufficient and appropriate learning resources. The headteacher has been innovative in accessing additional grants to support school developments, which are having a good impact on improving standards and learning. The school provides good value for money in terms of pupils' outcomes and the range of learning experiences provided.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Just under a third of the parents/carers completed the questionnaire and all express overall satisfaction with the school. Nearly all parents make very positive responses about the provision made for pupils. They say that their children like being there and that they feel their children are safe at school. They believe that their children make good progress and that they are kept well informed. They add that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem. They add that children receive sufficient additional support in relation to their learning needs and that pupils in the school behave well. Nearly all parents/carers believe that the school treats children fairly and with respect and that they are appropriately prepared to move on to their next school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Most pupils in KS2 completed the questionnaire. All state that they feel safe, enjoy school and know who to turn to for help and guidance. Nearly all believe that they are doing well. There is agreement that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and to live healthier lifestyles. Nearly all believe that there are enough resources to enable them to learn well and that homework helps them improve the standard of their work. Nearly all pupils feel that other pupils behave well at all times.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Sue Crowley	Team Inspector
Gwilym Davies	Lay Inspector
Andrew Thorne	Peer Inspector
Kay Emanuelli	School Nominee

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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