



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

**Tir-y-Berth Primary School
New Road
Tir-y-Berth
Hengoed
CF82 8AU**

Date of inspection: July 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.

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Context

Tir-y-Berth Primary School serves the villages of Tir-y-Berth, Glan-y-Nant and the surrounding area, which is situated in Caerphilly local authority. The area has been designated as a Communities First neighbourhood.

There are 226 pupils aged three to eleven years in the school. Pupils are organised into seven single age group classes and one additional nursery class of 39 full-time and part-time children. In addition, the school has two special resource base classes that cater for pupils from across the local authority with speech and language difficulties. There are three looked-after pupils in the school. The school describes most of the area it serves as disadvantaged with around a quarter neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. All pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language. Approximately 25% of pupils are entitled to free schools meals, which is above the local authority and the all-Wales average. The school has identified 22% of pupils with additional learning needs including 6% of pupils who receive a statement of special educational needs. There have been three fixed-term exclusions in the last 12 months.

The school has achieved a number of external awards, which include the renewal of the ICT Mark, the Basic Skills Quality Standard, Investors in People, Fairtrade Award and the second Eco School Green Flag Award.

Since the last inspection in 2005, the senior leadership of the school has changed, with a new headteacher and Foundation Phase leader joining the staff.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Tir-y-Berth Primary School is £3,199, which compares with a maximum of £6,296 and a minimum of £2,486 for primary schools in Caerphilly. The school has the 24th highest budget per pupil out of the 75 primary schools in Caerphilly.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of Tir-y-Berth Primary School is good because:

- standards of achievement and progress in learning for most pupils are good,
- standards in wellbeing are good and pupils' involvement in decision-making has a positive impact on the school's provision;
- the quality of teaching and assessment is generally good; and
- partnership work and extra-curricular activities enhance standards and quality in the school.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement in Tir-y-Berth Primary School are good because:

- the headteacher, senior management team and governors are successful in developing a shared vision for the school;
- there is a thorough process for self-evaluation using a range of first-hand evidence; and
- the school has a successful track record of improving standards and quality.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 continue to raise standards in key stage 1 and improve the performance of boys generally;
- R2 disseminate best practice to ensure a consistently high standard of teaching and learning across the school; and
- R3 further develop provision for outdoor learning for the under-fives.

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

Pupils generally make good progress as they move through the school. They show a significant improvement in performance from baseline assessment predictions to their achievement at the end of the key stages.

By the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils speak, read and write to a high standard. In general, pupils read and write well in range of different contexts across the curriculum. They generally present their work well, but this is inconsistent in lower key stage 2.

Over the last three years, girls have achieved better than boys in both key stages, with the difference being significant in English in key stage 2. However, information from recent teacher assessments shows a marked improvement in boys' performance.

Throughout the school, more able pupils make appropriate progress and nearly all achieve the higher levels in teacher assessments at the end of the key stages. These pupils agree challenging targets with their teachers and achieve consistently good standards in their work in lessons.

There is no significant difference between the achievements of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals and other pupils of a similar age.

Pupils with additional learning needs across the school and those who have speech and language difficulties in the resource base classes make good progress and achieve well in relation to their ability. They take a full part in lessons and, with suitable support, produce work of an appropriate standard.

In the Welsh language, most pupils achieve at a level appropriate to their age and ability. Within a range of familiar contexts, and in formal and informal situations, they engage in relevant Welsh conversations and read and write well across a range of subject areas.

At the end of key stage 1 and 2 teacher assessments indicate that pupils' performance has been variable over the last three years. In 2010, the performance of pupils in key stage 1 generally worsened when compared with that of other similar schools, but a higher proportion of pupils attained the higher level (level 3) in English and science. In key stage 2 the performance of pupils was significantly above that of other similar schools, particularly in reading and writing.

The outcomes of recent teacher assessments indicate an upward trend in the performance of pupils in key stage 1, with about a third of pupils attaining the higher level in English and science. In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level (level 5) in mathematics and science has also increased.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage enthusiastically with the tasks they are set. They are courteous to adults and considerate of each other. Behaviour is good throughout the school. The very few pupils who sometimes misbehave in lessons are well managed by teachers.

Nearly all pupils feel very safe in the school and are highly appreciative of the way it protects them from physical and verbal abuse. Most understand the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle and older pupils discuss well the purpose of 'quality thinking time'.

Attendance has increased steadily in recent years and is now in line with that for similar schools. While most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings, a very few are often late.

Across the school, pupils readily take on appropriate responsibilities. The school council is a strength of the school and members of this and the eco-committee are actively involved in making decisions and organising aspects of school life. The running of the school fruit shop along with the involvement of school councillors in 'learning walks' and in weekly meetings with the senior management team are excellent examples of this.

Pupils are well prepared for life and work outside school. A recent project based on money management enabled older pupils effectively to learn about financial issues. In addition, 'Enrichment Thursday' is extremely popular and enables pupils to develop life skills by engaging in activities including costume design, cookery and magazine publishing.

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

The school provides a wide range of good learning experiences that effectively meets pupils' needs. Planning is consistently detailed and carefully varied to meet the needs of all learners. In the resource bases, the National Curriculum is adapted sensitively to meet the individual needs of the pupils. Throughout the school pupils are actively involved in the planning process and, as a result, they find class topics interesting and stimulating.

Whole school planning of key skills is progressing well. Opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum are well established, but activities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in different contexts are less evident.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are very well attended by pupils. These activities have a very positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing; for example, the First Aid club offers accreditation to pupils.

Provision and planning for pupils' Welsh language development and the Welsh dimension is appropriate to the school's context and evident in all areas of the

curriculum, and in the daily life of the school. The involvement of pupils in the self-evaluation of bilingualism in the school has had a positive impact on the school's policy and its implementation.

The school effectively promotes the importance of sustainability and global citizenship amongst pupils and has successfully raised pupils' awareness of re-using, reducing and recycling limited resources. However, pupils' understanding of the causes of changes in the global environment and the likely effect of these is at an early stage of development.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding work in a few classes in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. For example, the arrangement for grouping similar ability pupils together for literacy in the upper junior classes is having a positive impact on standards of writing. Most teachers use a good range of approaches and activities to provide appropriate challenge and support for pupils. Across the school adults are well deployed to meet pupils' needs. In the very few cases where teaching is less effective, lessons lack pace and there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Assessment for Learning is generally well established throughout the school, particularly amongst the older pupils in key stage 2. Teachers' marking is generally purposeful and relevant to the learning activities. They carefully record pupils' progress in the basic skills and relevant targets are set for all pupils. Pupils are familiar with their own learning targets and talk about strategies for improving their work.

There is a robust process for confirming teacher assessments, particularly in literacy. All teachers attend standardisation and moderation sessions where they agree the levels awarded to pupils' work. These levels are often verified by cluster moderation processes and by local authority officers.

Reports to parents and carers are detailed and informative. Annual reviews for pupils in the resource bases are managed effectively and parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The quality of care, support and guidance for all pupils is good. The school provides well for the development of pupils' physical and emotional health. Arrangements for dealing with all forms of harassment are effective and appreciated by pupils. The school promotes and ensures good behaviour and attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well in lessons and through the wide range of relevant extra-curricular activities.

Support for pupils with additional learning needs is well managed and co-ordinated and includes the appropriate deployment of support staff. Effective, targeted support and guidance for these pupils enable staff to assess their progress regularly. Staff use this information effectively to provide further support for pupils with additional learning needs, if required.

The school makes effective use of a wide range of outside agencies to support pupils' learning; for example, there is a very strong relationship between the school and speech and language therapists. In the resource bases, joint planning between school staff and outside agencies is very good.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a fully inclusive community. All pupils have opportunities to attend after-school clubs, to join school committees and to participate in everything the school provides, irrespective of their backgrounds or any sensory or physical disabilities they may have. The school has clear procedures for addressing oppressive behaviour.

Overall, the school buildings and site are in good condition and well maintained. The classrooms meet the needs of pupils well and the libraries and sensory room are good examples of innovative use of surplus space. In the resource bases, classrooms provide an appropriate environment for pupils who have speech and language difficulties.

There is a good range of outdoor learning and play facilities including an off-site community allotment. The outdoor environment for the under-fives generally supports collaborative play but provides too few opportunities for children to develop their learning through play.

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

The headteacher, senior management team and governors have successfully developed a shared vision for the school. Roles and responsibilities of staff are clear.

The headteacher provides effective leadership and has high expectations. The school is very well organised and managed. Regular management team meetings, staff meetings and sound performance management arrangements contribute to improvements in learning and teaching.

Under the leadership of a very active chairperson, governors support the school well. They know about the performance of the pupils, the strengths of the school and the areas it needs to further develop. Governors challenge the school effectively and this is having a positive impact on the initiatives the school is developing.

The school is making good progress in introducing initiatives that meet local and national priorities such as the Foundation Phase, Assessment for Learning and the development of Physical Education in School Sport (PESS). These initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation strategy draws on an appropriate range of first-hand evidence. This evidence includes an analysis of the performance of pupils, regular observations of teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and the views of pupils, governors and parents. The innovative involvement of pupils in the process has had a very positive impact on standards in the school.

The outcomes of self-evaluation provide an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development and are used to determine appropriate priorities for school improvement. These are contained in a clear development plan. Implementation of the plan is having a positive impact on provision and standards in the school with priorities such as literacy and bilingualism developing well. The school has a successful track record of improving standards and quality.

The school is developing as an effective learning community with a number of professional learning communities that are having a positive impact on standards. Staff also collaborate well with other schools to improve their professional knowledge, for example the moderation of pupils' work in science.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership working is a strength of the school. A few partnerships have a significant impact on pupil outcomes; for example, the work of the local Communities First Partnership supports history and art projects and, together with visits from senior citizens, enriches the provision for pupils. Activities run in partnership with the University of Newport help to raise pupils' aspirations. These provide opportunities for pupils to experience health-based activities that enhance their wellbeing.

The school has strong partnerships with the service providers of the local authority, the police, the health authority and local primary and secondary schools. These are well organised and have a positive impact on the school's provision, pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The partnership with parents is generally strong and most parents are happy with the provision at the school. Weekly newsletters inform partners of current events in the school and the text messaging service allows the school to keep parents well informed. A few parents state that the school has not informed them clearly enough regarding a specific issue.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its budget appropriately and adjusts spending efficiently in response to changing circumstances. It deploys staff effectively and there is a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff in both mainstream classes and the resource bases. The school identifies and meets the needs of all staff through appropriate performance management procedures.

There are very good arrangements for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and these often enable teachers to work together on planning issues. These

arrangements and the provision of leadership time effectively meet the needs of the school.

The school accommodation is very well ordered and managed. Although the building is old, it has been well maintained and staff provide a very attractive and safe environment for pupils' learning. The school identifies and allocates resources in line with the targets and priorities identified in the school development plan.

In view of the good outcomes achieved by most pupils, the standard of care, support and guidance provided and the efficient management of finances, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

Ninety-eight pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Inspectors also talked to individual pupils and representative groups of pupils across the school. All pupils think that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress and pupils know whom to talk to if they find their work hard. In addition, nearly all pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. As a result, nearly all state that they are doing well at school and all pupils feel safe there.

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

Nearly all pupils state that the school deals well with bullying and most feel that children behave well at break and lunchtimes. However, a few think that the behaviour of others interferes with their work in class.

Overall, these views are in line with the views of pupils in other schools across Wales. However, a higher proportion of pupils in Tir-y-Berth Primary are positive about the behaviour of other pupils and how the school deals with instances of bullying. They are also more positive about the provision of homework and the resources and equipment they have.

Parent questionnaires

Thirteen parents attended the parents' meeting and twenty-nine parents completed the questionnaires. Overall, many feel that the school is well run. Most parents express satisfaction with the school and feel that their children are well prepared to move on to their next school.

Nearly all parents state that their children were helped to settle into school when they first started and that their children like school and are happy and safe there. Nearly all parents also feel that teaching is good and feel that children are expected to work hard. As a result, most parents state that their children are making good progress, and all feel that their children are becoming more mature and taking on responsibilities and are encouraged to be healthy. Many parents feel that there is a good range of activities in school and that homework given is appropriate. They also feel that their children are treated fairly and with respect. However, a minority of parents state that children do not receive enough additional support with their individual learning needs.

Many parents state that school staff are approachable if they have concerns or questions and they are well enough informed about their children's progress. A minority of parents do not feel that children behave well in school. Many parents

are clear about what to do if they need to raise issues with the school or to make a complaint.

Overall, many of these views are in line with the views of parents in other schools across Wales. However, parents in Tir-y-Berth Primary are not as positive about the behaviour of pupils, additional support for specific pupils, the information the school provides and approaching the school if they need to raise any issues.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Mike Maguire	Reporting Inspector
Terwyn Tomas	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Kate Olsen	Peer Inspector
Sian Clemens (Headteacher)	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11