



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

**Edwardsville Primary School
Cardiff Road
Edwardsville
Treharris
Merthyr Tydfil
CF46 5NE**

Date of inspection: March 2012

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

Edwardsville Primary School is situated in Treharris, on the outskirts of Merthyr Tydfil. The school mainly serves Treharris and the surrounding villages, but pupils who attend the school's learning resource bases for pupils with moderate learning difficulties come from a wider area within Merthyr Tydfil local authority. The school provides education for pupils between four and 11 years of age. There are currently 318 pupils on roll. Most pupils attend Treharris Nursery School until they are admitted to the reception class at Edwardsville in the September following their fourth birthday.

Approximately 25% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is slightly above local and national averages. Around 32% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs, but no pupil has a statement of special educational need. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnic origin and speak English at home. A very few come from homes where another language is also spoken, but nearly all of these pupils speak English competently. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Pupils are taught through the medium of English and Welsh is taught as a second language. There are 12 mainstream classes and two learning resource bases, one for Foundation Phase pupils and one for key stage 2 pupils. At present, a total of 21 pupils receive education in these classes.

The current headteacher was appointed in 2005. He has also been the acting headteacher of Treharris Nursery School since September 2010. Since the last inspection in 2006, pupil numbers have decreased from 361 to 318.

The individual school budget per pupil for Edwardsville Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,415 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil is £7,735 and the minimum is £328. Edwardsville Primary School is 12th out of the 24 primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good. This is because:

- many pupils achieve good standards by the end of their time at the school;
- the school is a happy, caring and inclusive environment in which pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and high levels of self-confidence;
- standards of pupil wellbeing are high throughout the school as a result of the good quality of care, support and guidance; and
- teaching is generally good and motivates many pupils well.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate. This is because:

- the headteacher and assistant headteacher have clear aims for the school and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement;
- there is an appropriate management structure in place that is designed to encourage shared leadership; and
- recently introduced procedures to strengthen self-evaluation provide a good structure for improving the quality and breadth of first-hand evidence.

However:

- middle level leaders and governors do not always have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to whole school improvement issues; and
- more thorough processes for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are very new and it is too early to judge the extent of their impact on standards.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in the Foundation Phase;
- R2 implement the planned curriculum to ensure coverage of National Curriculum and religious education requirements;
- R3 use marking and feedback more effectively to help pupils to improve their work;
- R4 improve the quality of monitoring so that self-evaluation and improvement planning is based on evaluative, first-hand evidence that focuses closely on standards; and
- R5 improve governors' skills, knowledge and understanding so that they can challenge the school robustly in relation to the standards and quality it achieves.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
-----------------------------------------------	-------------

Standards: Good

By the end of their time in the school, many pupils make good progress and achieve appropriate standards in relation to their age and ability. Pupils' outcomes at the age of 11 in English, mathematics and science have improved steadily every year for the past four years and now compare well with those of other similar schools. In 2011, the school was near the top of its family in all three core subjects. The outcomes of pupils at the age of seven are not as strong. Although the proportion achieving the expected levels is close to the family, local authority and national averages, results in science and English have weakened in recent years.

Most pupils with additional learning needs achieve well in relation to their starting points, particularly when they receive specific interventions to improve their reading and phonic knowledge. Boys' attainment, when compared with that of girls, is good at the end of both key stages in most indicators and is better than the outcomes for boys across Wales in general. Often, pupils at key stage 1 who are entitled to free school meals do not achieve as well as other pupils. However, by the end of key stage 2, this gap has narrowed significantly. Outcomes for more able pupils have improved in recent years and are now in line with those of similar schools.

In many lessons observed, progress and achievement are good. Most pupils recall previous learning well and often apply what they know and understand confidently to new situations. For example, more able Year 6 pupils transfer their understanding of co-ordinates in one quadrant with ease to work with reflective symmetry in four quadrants.

Standards in oracy throughout the school are good. Most pupils engage in and initiate conversations confidently. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately, particularly in mathematics. Reading skills are generally good and pupils access the curriculum appropriately at their own level. Many pupils write well for a wide range of purposes. For example, they know the features of poetry, diaries and reports and use these effectively in their own writing. However, pupils' skills in extended narrative writing are underdeveloped. Nearly all pupils use a wide range of skills in information and communication technology competently to enhance their learning and presentation across the curriculum.

Standards in Welsh are good. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to Welsh and are eager to use the language they have learnt, both in and beyond the classroom. They make good progress as they move through the school and many older pupils write well for their age and ability, using a good range of simple Welsh sentence patterns for different purposes.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have positive attitudes towards maintaining a healthy lifestyle through eating sensibly and taking regular exercise. Many take part enthusiastically in

extracurricular activities that support healthy living, such as the Dragon Sports club. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and are confident that they receive good personal support from the staff.

Attendance, at between 92% and 93% has remained steady over recent years and is in line with that of other, similar schools. Nearly all pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. Most have positive attitudes to learning and show interest and enthusiasm for their work and other aspects of school life.

Members of the active school council and eco-committee are proud of their work and take their responsibilities seriously. They feel that they make a positive contribution to decision-making, particularly in matters that affect their wellbeing. For example, their idea of including a football pitch in the key stage 2 play park has contributed to improved behaviour at playtimes.

Many pupils develop good social and life skills. They work effectively together in formal and informal situations and show respect for others. The effective peer mediation scheme, which is led by trained peer mentors, helps pupils to find their own solutions to problems and this contributes positively to the good standards of behaviour in the school. However, pupils' skills in improving their own learning are limited.

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

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school has detailed schemes of work that provide good guidance for the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. However, teachers do not always use these plans well enough to deliver the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. There are appropriate, personalised programmes that provide effective support in literacy for specific individuals and groups. The school's extra-curricular activities, including music, sporting, computer, art and gardening clubs, provide pupils with good opportunities for additional learning experiences. These clubs and visits to places such as Cardiff Bay and the National History Museum support the curriculum well.

Planning for the development of skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum is in place for many pupils. However, this planning is not yet complete at upper key stage 2 and opportunities to apply numeracy skills in a range of subjects are not consistently good in all classes.

The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. Staff work hard to encourage pupils to use the language regularly and this is strengthened by a strong partnership with the Welsh advisory teacher. Provision for developing the Welsh dimension is a strong feature of the school and there are plenty of valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh history and geography, as well as the arts and sport in Wales.

The work of the school council and eco committee supports pupils' learning about sustainable development and global citizenship well. Opportunities to further their understanding through the curriculum are not always fully developed.

Teaching: Good

Relationships between adults and pupils are nearly always good and this creates a positive atmosphere for learning. The quality of teaching is generally good. In many lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan relevant activities that engage pupils and develop an appropriate range of knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils. They provide appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils and encourage them to think for themselves, solve problems and reflect on their learning. Most lessons have good pace and teachers use a wide variety of strategies to maintain pupils' interest and secure good behaviour. In a few lessons where teaching is less effective, tasks are not always appropriate to the pupils' ability and teachers do not always ensure that all pupils are fully engaged.

Staff gather and record a wealth of information about pupils' progress in core subjects, and the assessment co-ordinator tracks pupil progress meticulously. Teachers share this information appropriately and use it well to identify pupils who require additional support. The quality of day-to-day marking, feedback and on-going assessment is not consistent enough. As a result, a few pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Where feedback is most effective, teachers make sure that pupils know what they are learning and why. They use skilful questioning to extend pupils' understanding and offer plenty of opportunities for pupils to set their own targets, and assess their own learning and that of their friends. Only a minority of teachers give pupils a clear indication of what they need to do to improve their work. Reports to parents are detailed and include very good opportunities for pupils to contribute their own thoughts about their progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides good care and support for its pupils. There are appropriate opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy eating through the provision of an appropriate lunch menu and a healthy tuck shop. Learning experiences, including an effective framework for personal and social education and opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, promote pupils' personal, moral, social and cultural development well. However, there are not always enough opportunities for reflection and spiritual development.

The school works efficiently with specialist services to ensure that all pupils' needs are met. Successful links exist with a relevant range of external agencies that provide good guidance, including the local authority's behaviour support teacher and the support worker for the hearing impaired. These have a positive impact on outcomes for specific pupils.

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

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good, both in mainstream classes and particularly in the learning resource bases. There are effective systems for identifying pupils who need additional support, including those who are more able. Support is focused on pupils' specific needs and early intervention schemes enable pupils to make good progress. Arrangements for the preparation, use and regular

review of individual education plans are effective. Plans contain clear targets and are written in language that pupils understand. Class teachers and the additional learning needs co-ordinator monitor progress regularly and keep parents fully informed. There are very good arrangements for pupils from the learning resource bases to be included in mainstream classes every day and this enhances the experiences of all pupils well.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a positive ethos that values all pupils and ensures equality of opportunity. It takes positive steps to discourage all forms of harassment and discrimination and pupils confirm that the school has good systems in place to prevent oppressive behaviour, including bullying. Racial and social equality issues are explored and discussed sensitively through the personal and social education programme, in subjects and in assemblies.

The school provides a caring and welcoming environment for all learners.

Accommodation and learning resources are good. Displays in corridors and classrooms support learning and celebrate achievement effectively. Outdoor areas provide good opportunities for learning and recreation. Foundation Phase staff use these areas effectively to support teaching and learning. Key stage 2 pupils have experienced an improvement in behaviour at break times since recent extensive developments to their playground.

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

Leadership: Adequate

The headteacher and assistant head have clear aims for the school and they ensure that everyone in the school community shares common values, especially in relation to pupils' wellbeing. This is reflected in the positive and supportive ethos that exists throughout the school. Leadership structures and roles have changed recently to encourage staff to share responsibilities more effectively. This is a positive development, but middle level leaders do not yet fully understand the extent of their new responsibilities.

The assistant headteacher analyses performance data well and senior leaders use this information effectively to identify key priorities for improvement. Regular leadership meetings provide appropriate opportunities to discuss important issues, such as pupil outcomes and school improvement. However, leaders do not always monitor staff performance well enough or ensure that improvement plans are consistently implemented.

Governors meet regularly and are very supportive of the school's work. The headteacher provides them with appropriate information about the school's performance and its priorities for improvement. However, governors are not always sufficiently involved in shaping the school's strategic direction and holding the school to account for standards and quality.

The school pays good attention to many Welsh Government and local priorities. It has worked hard to develop pupils' Welsh language skills, has implemented the Foundation Phase successfully and has prioritised literacy and numeracy appropriately in its development plan.

Improving quality: Adequate

Leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in many areas of the school's work. Recently introduced procedures to strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes provide a good structure for improving the quality and breadth of first-hand evidence. However, these processes are very new and it is too early to judge the extent of their impact on provision and outcomes. Previous monitoring activities were not carried out systematically enough. As a result, the information acquired was not always sufficiently evaluative and did not focus routinely on standards.

The school improvement plan is succinct and identifies relevant priorities, along with appropriate success criteria, timescales and costs. Responsibilities for managing specific priorities are shared, but accountability is not always clearly defined.

A few appropriate networks exist that enable staff to develop and share their expertise well. For example, involvement in a professional learning community with the local nursery school helped staff to develop a wider range of initial reading strategies in the Foundation Phase. Informal evaluations of the effectiveness of this initiative confirm that it supports smooth transition into the reception class and enables pupils to develop early reading skills more quickly and confidently.

Partnership working: Good

The school has developed a range of successful strategic partnerships with parents, the local authority, the community and other agencies and these have a positive influence on pupils' wider skills. For example, a link with the Education Business Partnership has improved the standards of reading for an identified group of boys. Staff have also trained volunteers to enable them to support pupils with their literacy. Close links with the church, chapel and further and higher education institutes provide enriching learning experiences that pupils would not otherwise have.

Induction arrangements for pupils entering the reception class, particularly those from the nursery school, are very effective. An extensive programme of visits provides good opportunities for pupils and parents to become familiar with the school, and this eases transition and enables pupils to settle quickly. Transition arrangements with the secondary school enable older pupils to prepare appropriately for the next stage in their education. A clear cluster transition plan and joint moderation of end of key stage 2 assessments inform both partners of what pupils can achieve. The creative pooling of funding with other schools to employ language development co-ordinators has improved parents' ability to support their own children and begun to tackle the link between disadvantage and underachievement.

Resource management: Good

Senior leaders manage the school's financial resources well. They monitor the budget carefully and ensure that spending is closely linked to improvement priorities. Staff and governors have recently allocated surplus funds appropriately to improve reading resources, complete the implementation of the Foundation Phase and create a well-designed play area for the pupils. The impact of these decisions on pupil outcomes, especially on wellbeing and behaviour, is beginning to become evident.

The school has enough qualified and experienced teachers and support staff who are generally suitably deployed. All have good opportunities to develop their professional skills. The majority of teaching assistants, for example, have attended courses to improve their spoken Welsh, and this has had a clear impact on pupil outcomes in Welsh.

Overall, the school uses its teaching resources well, particularly in information and communication technology. The school gives good value for money because of the generally good outcomes for many pupils.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

For the last three years, the proportion of seven-year-olds achieving the expected level at the end of key stage 1 in English, mathematics and science has been close to the family, local authority and national averages. However, the trend is downward and, in 2011, the figure dropped to just below these averages. Outcomes in mathematics are generally better than in English and science, both of which were below the national and family average in 2011. A significant decrease in attainment in oracy, in particular, has led to a deterioration in outcomes in English. Performance at the higher level 3 in the three core subjects has been consistently in line with all averages.

In 2011, boys performed consistently better than girls across all core subjects. However, a higher proportion of girls than boys attained the higher level 3 in science. The gap between the performance of key stage 1 pupils who receive free school meals and other pupils is generally in line with that of other, similar schools. However, in 2011, this gap grew to the largest in the family.

The performance of eleven-year-olds at the end of key stage 2 is more positive than outcomes at key stage 1. There have been steady and significant improvements in assessment results in English, mathematics and science nearly every year for the past four years and outcomes are now in line with, or just above, family, local authority and national averages. In 2011, the school was near the top of its family in all three core subjects.

Attainment of at the higher level 5 has improved slowly but significantly. In 2011, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 in mathematics and science is just below the national average and just in line with family and local authority averages. In nearly all indicators in 2011, boys performed better than girls, and this is in contrast to national trends. The only exception is that significantly more girls attain level 5 in English. The difference between the attainment of pupils who receive free school meals and other pupils has narrowed significantly in recent years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-six parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Most expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school and this is in line with national comparisons. All parents say that their children like school and that they were helped to settle in well when they started there. Nearly all feel that their children are making good progress, although a minority of parents feel that they are not given enough information about their children's achievements. A few parents have concerns about their children's safety at school, but most think that behaviour is good. Most believe that teaching is good and all feel that staff have high expectations of pupils. They are confident that their children are treated fairly and with respect. All agree that the school encourages their children to eat healthily and take regular exercise. However, a minority feel that the range of activities, trips and visits the school undertakes is not good enough. Nearly all parents who responded think that the school is well run and are happy to approach the school if they have questions, although a minority do not fully understand what to do if they wish to make a formal complaint. A few parents do not feel that homework always builds well on what their children are doing at school. All parents think that their children receive appropriate additional support for their additional learning needs. Nearly all parents and carers believe that teachers help their children to become more mature and take on responsibility, although a few do not feel that their children are well prepared for the move to the secondary school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Ninety-seven pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and responses to most questions were extremely positive. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and believe that they are doing well. They know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset and feel that the school deals well with any bullying. Nearly all agree that the school helps them to be healthy and provides them with plenty of opportunities to be physically active. All pupils feel strongly that teachers and support staff help them to learn and make progress. Children know what to do and whom to turn to if they are struggling and nearly all think that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school. All think that there are enough resources to enable them to learn effectively. A minority of pupils have concerns about behaviour on the playground and feel that they cannot always get their work done in class. Although this reflects the opinions often held by primary-aged pupils, these negative responses are higher than national averages.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Sarah Morgan	Reporting Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Gareth Wynn Roberts	Team Inspector
Catherine Jenkins	Lay Inspector
Julie Jones	Peer Inspector
Colin Davies (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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	Reception, 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

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.