



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

**Llanfabon Infants School
Bryncelyn Avenue
Nelson
Treharris
CF46 6HL**

Date of inspection: April 2013

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

Llanfabon Infants School is in the small town of Nelson in the Rhymney Valley and caters for pupils from ages three to seven years. Virtually all the pupils come from the immediate surrounding area. The area has both privately owned and rented homes. Around 30% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is below local averages but above national averages and is rising.

There are currently 163 pupils on roll including 55 in the two nursery classes. There are five classes in total taught by five full-time and one part-time teacher. They are assisted by eight full-time and three part-time learning support staff.

The school has identified that around 12% of pupils have additional learning needs with very few pupils having a statement of special educational need. Very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background and no pupils use Welsh as a first language. The school excluded very few pupils in the last year.

The headteacher was appointed in 2007. The school was last inspected in the same year.

The individual school budget per pupil for Llanfabon Infants School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,302 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Llanfabon Infants School is 23rd out of the 75 primary schools in Caerphilly in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The judgement for current performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve well;
- pupils' literacy skills are particularly well developed;
- staff plan a wide range of interesting and varied learning experiences that interest pupils;
- teaching is effective in challenging pupils of all abilities; and
- the school has a very caring and welcoming ethos.

Prospects for improvement

The judgement for prospects for improvement is good because:

- the headteacher provides strong and effective leadership;
- the school develops all its staff well;
- there is a strong culture of wanting to improve and raise standards;
- the school has a very successful track-record of improvement;
- the governing body supports and challenges the school well; and
- all resources are managed effectively.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that pupils apply their numeracy skills at the appropriate level across all areas of learning

R2 Improve attendance

R3 Make regular and effective use of the outdoor areas to develop pupils' independent learning skills

What happens next?

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

Main findings

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

Pupils enter the school with a wide spread of ability, although many have skills similar to those expected of pupils of a similar age. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most make good progress and achieve well.

Standards in literacy are high. Nearly all pupils listen attentively and many speak confidently and clearly. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and with understanding when explaining their learning to others.

Most pupils write competently for their age and stage of development and apply these skills at the appropriate level across all areas of learning. Older and more able pupils write extensively in a wide range of genres. All pupils' knowledge of the sounds and names of letters is at least in line with, and often beyond, expectations. Their proficient word-building skills enable them to spell most common words accurately and make good attempts at less familiar words.

Most pupils in Year 2 read confidently and clearly. Many are very keen and fluent readers and talk easily about books they enjoy and the characters in them. Most pupils use their word-building skills effectively to help them read unfamiliar words. They read for pleasure regularly and they also read to find things out. A few use the index in reference books skilfully.

Most pupils have good standards of mathematical development but they do not apply these skills an appropriate level in other areas of learning.

Most pupils who need extra help with their learning make good progress. Generally, at the expected levels, girls achieve slightly higher than boys. For the higher levels, boys achieve slightly better than girls. Pupils who have additional support for their English make rapid progress.

Nearly all pupils' Welsh language skills are developing well. Many understand classroom instructions and respond appropriately to simple questions, such as 'Sut mae'r tywydd heddiw?' Many Year 2 pupils read familiar Welsh words and phrases accurately. Pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. However, only a few pupils use incidental Welsh outside of Welsh lessons.

In 2012, results for pupils achieving the expected outcome 5 in the end of Foundation Phase assessments were in the top 25% of those for similar schools for the Foundation Phase indicator, language, literacy and communication and mathematical development. They were in the upper 50% of similar school results for pupils' personal and social development. For the higher outcome 6, all indicators were in the top 25% of those for similar schools.

Pupils achieved more highly than the average for the school's family for all indicators at both outcome 5 and outcome 6.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Nearly all pupils feel safe in the school and have a strong understanding of the importance of healthy eating and living. They behave very well in lessons and at break times.

Almost all pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy lessons. They start work quickly and stay on task for long periods. Most pupils work effectively in groups or teams but their ability to work independently is underdeveloped. Many pupils join in the extra-curricular activities on offer to them and this contributes to their learning well. Most pupils make a keen contribution to planning activities and how and what they learn.

The school council has raised funds to buy a good range of outdoor apparatus and equipment that pupils make good use of at break times. It has also developed class rules on behaviour, produced anti-bullying posters and provides friendship and support for other pupils. Members of the school council and of the eco-committee are proud of the responsibilities they have.

Attendance in 2012, at nearly 92%, has improved slightly over the last two years. However, the school has been in the lowest 25% of similar schools for four years and figures are below the family average. A few families cause many of these absences. Most pupils are punctual.

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

The school provides a wide range of interesting learning experiences that meet pupils' needs well. Teachers work well together to plan topics and themes that cover all areas of learning for the Foundation Phase appropriately. There is generally good use of withdrawal groups to support children who need extra help with their learning.

The school's provision for literacy, especially its approach to teaching the names and sounds of letters, is a particular strength and helps pupils to achieve highly. Opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are appropriate. Pupils have good opportunities to use Welsh as they play and learn. However, staff's own Welsh language skills are not always good enough to extend pupils' learning effectively. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other areas of learning but these are not at a level that challenges pupils well enough.

The school plans well to promote the Welsh dimension, with interesting studies of Welsh landmarks and famous people both recent and historic, for example Mari Jones and Andrew Coombs. Displays within classrooms include suitable vocabulary, which promotes pupils' ability to use Welsh and fosters a positive attitude towards their Welsh identity.

The school provides a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities that support pupils' education well, such as an Eco club, cookery, ICT, French, dance and board games. All of these enhance the learning that goes on in the classroom.

The school is a thoroughly sustainable environment, which actively seeks to control the use of its energy and other resources. Pupils are deeply involved in this, led by an enthusiastic eco committee, and most are developing a good understanding of the principles involved. They also gain a good appreciation of cultures around the world through, for example, class topics and a multi-cultural week.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is consistently good and in a very few lessons it is excellent. Teachers provide activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and these challenge all pupils successfully. They have high expectations of pupils in terms of their behaviour and attitudes. Teachers plan lessons well, building successfully on what pupils already know, and they use available resources to good effect. Teachers manage support staff very effectively and they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. On a few occasions, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to develop their independent learning skills.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give them helpful oral and written feedback on their performance. They consistently encourage pupils to take note of feedback. However, staff do not always make clear what pupils need to do next to improve their work. Pupils' ability to assess their own and others' work is developing well in most classes.

The school uses its tracking system effectively to assess pupils' learning, to inform planning and to identify those pupils who need extra help with their learning. Teachers assess the standards of pupils' work accurately and there is effective moderation of end of Foundation Phase assessments. Reports for parents and carers are informative.

Care, support and guidance: Good

A strong feature of the school is its provision to celebrate pupils' cultural diversity through whole school studies of Sri Lanka, Ireland, and religious and cultural festivals. The general ethos of the school and the quality of relationships significantly enhance pupils' social and moral development and encourage them to take responsibility for their own actions. This has had a strong impact on developing high standards of pupil behaviour. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is appropriate.

The provision for pupils' understanding of healthy living and lifestyles is very good. The school gives suitable opportunities to develop pupils' wellbeing. Although the school promotes punctuality and regular attendance strongly, this has not had enough impact to raise attendance levels to those of similar schools.

The provision for pupils with additional learning skills is good. Teachers respond promptly to concerns and ensure suitable provision for these pupils. Individual

education plans are child friendly, involve pupil assessment and are evaluated and updated regularly. Support is co-ordinated effectively and good use is made of external agencies according to need.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school provides a calm environment for pupils that helps to encourage effective teaching and learning. It values the diversity of pupils and ensures equality of opportunity for all. It takes positive steps to discourage any bullying and any form of discrimination.

The building is bright, clean and well maintained and meets the needs of its pupils well. The classrooms are of suitable sizes and are well furnished and resourced. Staff make good use of the natural environment within the site boundary to provide creative learning opportunities. The outdoor area is used well for teacher-led activities, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use the outdoors for independent work.

Wall displays in public areas are informative and celebratory and are of the highest quality. Those in the classrooms generally support pupils' learning well. Learning resources are of a high quality and meet pupils' needs effectively.

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

The headteacher's clear strategic vision and strong leadership have moved the school forward significantly since the last inspection. She and senior leaders communicate effectively with other staff and governors. They have identified relevant priorities for improving standards and provision for pupils and created a climate of shared leadership and responsibility.

The school's clear focus on relevant professional development enables all staff to contribute effectively to achieving the school's aims and improving pupil outcomes. Senior leaders have high expectations of themselves and others. Meetings focus closely on school improvement priorities and result in clear action points to bring about improvements such as those in the standards of pupils' literacy. The headteacher identifies and develops the talents of individuals well. By allowing staff at all levels to take a lead in key aspects of the work and life of the school, she has secured their enthusiasm and commitment to the school's strategic priorities.

The headteacher keeps governors well informed about all aspects of school life. Her regular, detailed reports have a clear focus on standards, provision and leadership. As a result, governors develop a sound understanding of the school's progress, its improvement targets and its performance in relation to that of other similar schools. This enables them to provide leaders with appropriate levels of challenge.

School leaders pay good attention to national and local initiatives that are relevant to the school's needs. For example, the school's work in improving standards of literacy and mathematics has improved pupil outcomes in end of year assessments.

Improving quality: Good

Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in developing many areas of its provision. As a result of effective self-evaluation and school improvement planning over time, pupils' standards have improved significantly in many areas.

There is a clear self-evaluation timetable in place. Leaders take good account of information from a wide range of appropriate first-hand evidence, including lesson monitoring, book scrutiny and listening to learners. Leaders regularly seek the views of pupils and parents and respond appropriately. For example, staff created a helpful mathematics presentation for parents, following feedback from a previous workshop. This helped raise parents' awareness of how to support their children. Subject co-ordinators undertake detailed analyses of provision and standards in their areas of learning. They create relevant action plans in response to their findings that senior leaders use effectively to inform school improvement planning.

The current school development plan is a detailed document. It identifies relevant targets, specific steps the school intends to take, personnel responsible, appropriate timescales and resource implications. Success criteria are often quantifiable and link closely to pupil outcomes.

The school has become a strong learning community. All staff are reflective practitioners who support and challenge one another to continually improve provision and raise standards. The majority of teachers are involved in networks of professional practice with other schools that have improved outcomes for pupils. For example, a classroom-based research project on transition with the partner junior school has raised standards in wellbeing for pupils transferring from Year 2 to Year 3.

Partnership working: Good

A good range of partnership activities with parents, other schools, the local authority and the community make a strong contribution to improving outcomes for pupils.

The school has developed successful links with parents and carers. Good communication and the provision of focused subject workshops enable many parents to support their children's education more effectively. This has been particularly effective in securing the involvement of a few hard-to-reach families. For example, as a direct result of introducing home-school learning logs, the parents of a few pupils with additional learning needs now seek support from the school more readily and confidently. The school's particularly good work with families has been recognised by the achievement of a nationally accredited award.

The school takes a leading role in developing joint planning and quality assurance with other schools in the cluster. The introduction of a common approach to teaching phonics in the infant and junior schools has secured continuity and progression in literacy learning from Foundation Phase to key stage 2. Effective moderation

processes with other primary and secondary schools in the cluster have resulted in comprehensive portfolios of assessed work that support accurate teacher assessment well.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its staff and resources carefully. The headteacher and governing body finance committee, with good support from the local authority, monitor spending carefully. They ensure that spending decisions link closely to school priorities and benefit pupils. The governing body is rigorous in its appointment of new staff and, over time, this has had a major impact on the quality of teaching and support in place for pupils throughout the school. The headteacher deploys teachers and support staff effectively, using their time, expertise and experience well to improve pupil standards. For example, skilled teaching assistants lead literacy and mathematics target groups for pupils at risk of under-performing. This strategy has been successful in ensuring that they achieve at least the appropriate level by the end of the Foundation Phase.

Performance management is systematic and comprehensive and informs the provision of relevant, high quality training. This allows teaching and support staff to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding well and has had a good impact on the ethos and performance of the school.

The school's broad and inclusive provision secures good outcomes for pupils and offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2012, results for pupils achieving the expected outcome 5 in the end of Foundation Phase assessments placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools for the Foundation Phase indicator, language, literacy and communication and mathematical development. The school was in the upper 50% of similar schools for pupils' personal and social development. For the higher outcome 6, all indicators were in the top 25% of those for similar schools.

Pupils achieved more highly than the average for the school's family for all indicators at both outcome 5 and outcome 6.

Most pupils who need extra help with their learning make good progress. Generally, at the expected levels, girls achieve slightly higher than boys. For the higher levels, boys achieve slightly better than girls. Pupils who have additional support for their English make rapid progress.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Response to parent questionnaire

Thirty-six parents or carers responded to the questionnaire.

Most parents are satisfied with the school and think that:

- their child likes school and is making good progress;
- teaching is good;
- their child is safe in school;
- pupils have appropriate additional support if necessary;
- the school helps their child to be more mature and take on responsibility;
- homework builds well on what pupils learn in school;
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress;
- their child is well prepared for moving on to the junior school;
- they are comfortable approaching the school if they have a problem;
- staff treat all pupils equally and with respect;
- pupils behave well in school;
- the school helps children to settle in well; and
- there is a good range of trips or visits.

In almost all cases the parents' and carers' responses are similar to those from other primary schools across Wales.

Response to pupil questionnaire

Foundation Phase pupils do not complete questionnaires and consequently there is no summary available.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Richard Hawkley	Reporting Inspector
Sarah Morgan	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Tania Rickard	Peer Inspector
Pat Wood	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.