



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

**Pengam Primary School
Commercial Street
Pengam
Blackwood
NP12 3ST**

Date of inspection: May 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

Pengam Primary School is in the village of Pengam, near Blackwood in the Caerphilly local authority. Around half of the pupils come from outside of the school's designated catchment area.

The school has 215 pupils aged three to 11 years on roll, including 36 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. There are seven classes in the school.

Pupils come from areas that are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. About 29 % of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is higher than the average for Wales (21%).

The school has identified about 20% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. This is slightly below the average for Wales (22%). A very few pupils have a statement of special educational need and a very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. No pupil was excluded in the 12 months prior to the inspection.

Most pupils are of white British ethnicity. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language. No pupil speaks Welsh at home.

The headteacher, who is also the head of a neighbouring school, was appointed in 1995. Since September 2012, the headship of both schools is shared between the headteacher (three days per week) and the deputy headteacher (two days per week).

The individual school budget per pupil for Pengam Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £2,825 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Pengam Primary School is 55th 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

Pengam Primary School's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make at least the expected levels of progress during their time in school;
- pupils' performance at both the expected and higher levels compares well with the family and other similar schools averages;
- most pupils enjoy learning and have the skills necessary to improve their own work;
- teaching and assessment are of good quality; and
- the school is a safe, caring and happy community.

Prospects for improvement

Pengam Primary School's prospects for improvement are good because:

- both headteachers share the same clear vision and promote it successfully to staff, pupils and the wider community;
- governors plan well for the strategic development of the school;
- leaders have a generally accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- staff take part in regular activities, such as joint learning walks, that help them to share good practice and ideas; and
- the school has a wide range of partnerships that help to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' knowledge of basic mental calculation strategies

R2 Improve standards in Welsh

R3 Improve the focus on standards when monitoring and evaluating pupils' work

R4 Ensure that the school development plan focuses on a manageable number of key priorities

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils make at least the expected levels of progress during their time in school. Although pupils' progress varies across the year groups, a significant minority of pupils make better than expected progress in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils generally listen well and develop good oral skills. In partner and group work, many listen to the ideas of their peers and often collaborate effectively to solve problems. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils develop good questioning skills and offer logical arguments to back up their opinions. In a few instances, pupils' enthusiasm to speak and to take part in discussions stops them from listening carefully when others are speaking.

In the Foundation Phase and lower key stage 2, pupils' reading skills develop soundly. More able pupils read fluently and accurately. They demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read and predict what might happen next in the story. However, a minority of pupils have a weak grasp of phonic skills and have limited strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. The reading intervention programmes address the gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively and, by the end of key stage 2, a majority of pupils achieve a reading age above their chronological age. Pupils of average and above average ability in Year 6 read with maturity and enjoyment.

Pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. In the nursery and reception class, many use their emergent writing skills well across the areas of learning and a few more able pupils build up words based on their knowledge of sounds. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils retell familiar stories using a varied vocabulary well. Many form letters appropriately and have a basic understanding of sentence punctuation. A minority of pupils have a limited knowledge of key spelling patterns and often misspell common words. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils write well across a range of genres. Most pupils have a good awareness of grammar and punctuation. Their handwriting style develops appropriately and standards of presentation are generally good. A few more able pupils in Year 6 achieve excellent standards in their writing. These pupils develop their ideas and arguments effectively, showing a good awareness of their audience. Many pupils redraft and improve their work appropriately.

Pupils apply their measuring and data handling skills effectively in a range of subjects. However, few pupils use an appropriate range of basic mental calculation strategies. This impedes their ability to apply their number skills quickly and accurately to numerical problems. Pupils develop and apply their thinking and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well across all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils develop their Welsh language skills appropriately in the Foundation Phase and a majority of pupils ask and answer simple questions correctly. They read and respond to simple Welsh texts and write basic personal information. Pupils continue to develop their speaking and listening skills in Welsh through key stage 2, but their progress in reading and writing in Welsh is limited.

In the end of Foundation Phase assessments, pupils' performance at the both the expected and higher outcomes compares well with performance levels in similar schools and other schools in the family. In 2012, for the expected outcome, the school was in the top 25% for the Foundation Phase indicator, language literacy and communication and mathematical development. The school was in the upper 50% for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, and in the top 25% at the higher outcomes in all three assessed areas of learning. Pupils' performance at both the expected and higher outcomes was above the averages for the family.

In the end of key stage 2 teacher assessments, pupils' performance at both the expected and higher levels generally compares well with performance levels in other similar schools and those in the family. In 2012, the school was in the top 25% in mathematics at both the expected and higher levels. Performance in the core subject indicator and in English placed it in the upper 50%. In the core subject indicator, English and mathematics, pupils' performance at the expected and higher levels was above the averages for the family, the local authority and Wales.

Pupils' performance in science is more variable. In 2012, pupils' performance in science placed the school in the lower 50% of similar schools and below the family average.

Wellbeing: Good

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Nearly all are engaged and motivated and they display pride and confidence in their work. Most face new experiences and challenges confidently and are keen to inquire and ask questions. Most pupils have the skills needed to improve their own learning, work with others and solve problems.

Pupils are considerate and courteous. They relate well to each other and to adults and they generally demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and understand the importance of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. Many participate in the very good range of after school clubs. Attendance over the past three years has fluctuated, placing the school between the top 25% of similar schools and the lower 50%. Most pupils are punctual.

As they mature, most pupils readily undertake additional responsibilities and play an active part in school-life and the local community through the school council, the eco-committee and other activities, such as being ICT ambassadors. Pupils are involved well in decisions about what and how they learn.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

Staff collaborate effectively to plan interesting and imaginative activities, which engage pupils well. Learning experiences provide good levels of challenge for most pupils, including the more able. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements. However, the provision for science at key stage 2 is sometimes too narrow.

The school plans effectively to develop pupils' writing, thinking and ICT skills across the curriculum. Guided group reading sessions help pupils to improve their reading skills, but the provision to develop pupils' knowledge of phonics in the Foundation Phase does not always build well enough on pupils' earlier skills. The school plans well for pupils to apply their measuring and data skills across the curriculum, but provision does not focus well enough on developing pupils' basic mental calculation strategies in mathematics.

The school develops pupils' Welsh language skills in the Foundation Phase effectively. In key stage 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills continue to develop well. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Wales.

Through both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, the school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn about education for sustainable development. As a result, many pupils have a good understanding of the importance of conserving energy and looking after the planet. The school's provision to develop pupils' understanding of global citizenship is appropriate.

Teaching: Good

Many teachers ask effective questions that encourage pupils to think for themselves and to learn independently. Teachers value pupils' opinions and a majority build well on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers discuss the expected outcomes from lessons consistently with pupils and this helps pupils to judge how well they have achieved the objectives for the lesson. Many teachers conduct lessons at a good pace, ensuring the full engagement of pupils. Many teachers use plenary sessions well to recap the main points of the lesson and to reinforce key teaching points. A majority of teachers use Welsh effectively during the course of lessons. However, too few encourage responses in Welsh from their pupils, especially in key stage 2.

Additional staff provide effective support for groups and individual pupils. Many give clear explanations and have a good understanding of how to move pupils' learning forward. All staff establish good working relationships with pupils and many use positive behaviour management strategies effectively.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and, in literacy work in particular, they provide pupils with useful feedback on how they can improve. Many teachers use assessment for learning strategies well during the course of lessons to check pupils'

understanding. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' previous achievements and use this information well to track pupils' progress over the course of the year. A majority of teachers make useful weekly evaluations about the standards pupils achieve in particular lessons. Senior staff track pupils' progress well and use the information, combined with discussions with teachers, to inform the make-up of intervention groups and catch-up programmes. Reports to parents and carers are informative and meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has effective procedures to support pupils' health and wellbeing, as well as to encourage their involvement in the school and the wider community. For example, the walking bus, alongside a good range of sporting activities, encourages pupils to be physically active. Through its programme for personal and social education, the school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has appropriate procedures for encouraging pupil attendance, but does not always intervene at an early enough stage if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. The school has effective procedures and systems to identify pupils in need of additional support at an early stage. Pupils' individual educational plans are child friendly and include clear targets, which are regularly evaluated and updated. Staff keep parents and carers well informed about the additional support their child receives. The school uses the specialist knowledge of outside agencies well to help pupils, especially those who are vulnerable and in need of emotional support. The school provides a good range of intervention programmes for pupils that need to catch-up with their peers and staff track pupils' progress over the course of the intervention effectively.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school is a happy and welcoming community with a safe family atmosphere where all pupils have equal opportunities. The school treats pupils fairly and with respect and helps them to recognise and celebrate diversity. Learning activities and school assemblies help pupils to develop respect and tolerance for each other. The school places a good emphasis on celebrating pupils' achievement and talents. Pupils' personal development targets help them to make the link between learning in school and in their everyday lives.

The school's accommodation is well maintained and clean. The classrooms are well organised and are effective and stimulating learning environments. The school has developed its outdoor areas very successfully. The forest school, gardening area and chicken enclosure all help to provide pupils with outdoor learning experiences of a high quality. Staff and pupils make good use of a wide range of resources to support learning. Good quality displays throughout classrooms and in communal areas are colourful and celebrate pupils' work well.

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

Leadership: Good

Both headteachers share the same clear vision and promote it successfully to staff, pupils and the wider community. This creates confidence, trust and co-operation amongst all members of the school's community. Leaders give strong strategic direction to the life and work of the school and this has a positive influence on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school shares leadership roles and areas of responsibility well. When carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities, staff are developing their understanding of the importance of focussing on pupils' standards rather than on provision. Leaders and staff use data effectively to analyse and monitor performance. The school has appropriate performance management arrangements that help staff to improve their practices. For example, a twenty-week professional development programme for additional staff, identified through performance management processes, is improving their confidence in using Welsh.

Governors understand the school's performance data well and know how well the school performs compared with other similar schools and within the family. The governing body contributes appropriately to the self-evaluation process and monitors the school's progress against the targets in the school development plan appropriately. Governors plan well for the strategic development of the school.

The school takes good account of local and national priorities. For example, the Foundation Phase is well established and the school has focussed appropriately on developing pupils' thinking skills and the use of assessment for learning strategies throughout the school.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders and managers have a generally accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All teachers complete an end-of-year summary of performance for their class, highlighting the next steps for groups and individuals. These summaries feed well into the whole-school cycle of self-evaluation. Senior leaders involve co-ordinators appropriately in regular monitoring activities that are beginning to focus more appropriately on the standards pupils achieve as well on the school's provision. Senior leaders take good account of the views of parents and external reviews.

The link between the school's self-evaluation report and their development plan is sound. The school's development plan is a useful tool in helping to drive forward improvement. Previous plans have led to a whole-school focus on improving reading through the introduction of guided group reading sessions and on improving pupils' thinking. These initiatives have been successful in raising pupils' standards. However, while the current plan contains many actions, it is not always clear to staff what the school's main priorities for improvement are. Staff take part in regular activities, such as joint learning walks, that help them to share good practice and ideas. Many teachers are involved in effective networks that provide opportunities for

them to work with other teachers in nearby schools. Their participation in these networks has helped staff to raise pupils' standards in ICT and to improve the provision in the Foundation Phase.

Partnership working: Good

The school's partnership with parents and carers is strong and they support the school well. They receive regular information about the school's activities and curriculum, for example through reports, letters and the school's interactive website. The school has an extensive range of partnerships within the local community. Visitors from the community contribute regularly to school life and enhance pupils' learning experiences. For example, the partnership with a local credit union has helped to improve pupils' understanding of financial matters.

Joint working with other local primary schools is well established and the regular sharing of good practice has helped to improve the school's provision. The school also has very strong links with its feeder secondary school. The joint moderation arrangements are beneficial and lead to consistent judgements and accurate assessments. There are good arrangements for joint professional development activities between the primary and secondary school. Transition arrangements are very good and enable pupils to transfer confidently and successfully at the age of 11.

Resource management: Good

The school has sufficient qualified teachers and support staff that are deployed effectively. The school uses its performance management processes appropriately to identify whole school and individual professional development needs and allocates funding in line with these priorities. The school has suitable arrangements for teachers' planning preparation and assessment time.

The school's spending decisions relate well to its priorities for improvement. For example, the recent purchase of tablet computers and other ICT equipment has improved the school's provision for ICT and pupils' standards. The school has effective procedures for monitoring resources, staffing levels and the budget. Most pupils make at least the expected levels of progress during their time in school. The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance at both the expected and higher outcomes compares well with performance levels in similar schools and other schools in the family. In 2012, for the expected outcome, the school was in the top 25% for the Foundation Phase indicator, language literacy and communication and mathematical development. The school was in the upper 50% for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, and in the top 25% at the higher outcomes in all three assessed areas of learning. Pupils' performance at both the expected and higher outcomes was above the averages for the family.

The performance of girls is better than boys at the higher outcome in all three assessed areas of learning. The difference in performance between boys and girls is significantly bigger than family, the local authority and Wales averages. Boys' performance at the higher level is below the family average while girls' performance is well above. In 2012, all Foundation Phase pupils in receipt of free school meals achieved the Foundation Phase indicator.

In key stage 2, pupils' performance at both the expected and higher levels generally compares well with other similar schools and those in the family. In 2012, the school was in the top 25% in mathematics at both the expected and higher levels. Performance in the core subject indicator and English was in the upper 50%. In the core subject indicator, English and mathematics, pupils' performance at the expected and higher levels was above the average for the family, the local authority and Wales.

Pupils' performance in science is more variable. In 2012, pupils' performance in science placed it in the lower 50% of similar schools and below the family average.

Over time, girls generally perform better than boys in English and boys perform better in mathematics. The differences are very similar to those in other schools in the family. There is no discernible pattern in science. However, in 2012, no boy achieved the higher level in science compared with 36% of girls.

Key stage 2 pupils entitled to free school meals do not generally achieve as well as other pupils. The difference in performance is greater than the average for Wales and the family.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

One hundred and one pupils in key stage 2 completed the learner questionnaire.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school.

Most pupils:

- think the school deals well with any bullying;
- know whom to speak to if they are worried or upset;
- think the school teaches them how to be healthy and gives them plenty of opportunities for regular exercise;
- feel that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress; and
- know what to do and whom to ask if they are finding their work difficult.

Many pupils:

- think that their homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school; and
- think that nearly all pupils behave well at play times and lunch time.

Overall, pupils' responses are slightly less positive than those of other pupils in primary schools in Wales. Around one-half of pupils think that the behaviour of others prevents them from getting their work done in class. This is significantly higher than the responses from pupils in most schools in Wales.

Forty-seven parents or carers completed the parent/carer questionnaire.

All parents or carers that responded:

- are satisfied with the school and say that their child likes attending;
- believe their child was helped to settle when he/she started school;
- think that teaching is good and staff expect their child to work hard and do their best;
- feel that homework builds well on what their child learns in school; and
- say that their child is safe in school and is encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise.

Nearly all parents or carers that responded:

- feel comfortable approaching the school with a question, suggestion or problem;
- think the school is well run;
- say that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility and prepares them well for their next school;
- believe that their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to their particular individual needs;

- think there are a good range of trips and visits; and
- feel well informed about their child's progress.

Most parents or carers that responded:

- say that staff treat all children fairly and with respect; and
- say they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

The responses of parents or carers are generally more positive than those of other parents or carers in primary schools in Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Liz Miles	Reporting Inspector
David Davies	Team Inspector
Deirdre Emberson	Lay Inspector
Lynda Houston	Peer Inspector
Sue Witchell	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.