



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

**Risca Primary School
Danygraig Road
Risca
Caerphilly
NP11 6DB**

Date of inspection: January 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

Risca Primary School caters for pupils aged three to 11 in 12 mixed ability classes. The school is situated in the Ebbw valley, about five miles north of Newport. There are currently 342 pupils on roll, including 25 children in the nursery. The school receives an average of 30 pupils from a local infant school at the start of Year 3. Most pupils come from the catchment area; an area which is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

The school identifies that around 10% of the pupils have additional learning needs. A few pupils have statements of special educational need. No pupils speak Welsh at home and a very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

The individual school budget per pupil for Risca Primary School in 2012-2013 is £2,798. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Caerphilly local authority is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Risca Primary School is in 59th position of the 75 primary schools in the authority in terms of school budget per pupil.

The headteacher was appointed in April 2009 and the school was last inspected in March 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's performance is good because:

- nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning and develop their literacy skills well;
- pupils achievement at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 compares well with the performance of similar schools within the family;
- pupils' wellbeing, including behaviour, is good;
- pupils with additional learning needs are particularly well supported;
- the curriculum is broad and balanced and has a clear focus on the progressive development of pupils' skills; and
- the overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and senior management team provide clear leadership that creates a strong sense of purpose;
- effective evaluation activities lead to improved pupil performance in important skills, such as reading and writing;
- planning for improvement is a strength of the school and focuses clearly on raising pupils' standards;
- staff collaborate effectively within the school and with other professional learning communities;
- the headteacher and staff manage all resources skilfully and the school's expenditure is monitored regularly and appropriately; and
- the school gives good value for money.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the standards of pupils' Welsh oracy, reading and writing skills
- R2 Continue to raise the standards of literacy achieved by boys at the end of key stage 2
- R3 Improve the provision for Welsh and the Welsh dimension
- R4 Strengthen aspects of assessment for learning, particularly the use of success criteria

What happens next?

Risca Primary 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

Nearly all the pupils of Risca Primary School make good progress in their learning. Across the school they produce work of a good standard during lessons and in their books. Most pupils concentrate well, persevere with tasks, recall their previous learning successfully and discuss their work confidently. Nearly all, including those who receive additional support, make good progress against their targets.

Most pupils make good progress in applying their literacy and communication skills, together with their numeracy and information and communication technology skills (ICT) across the curriculum.

In the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, the majority of pupils across the school listen attentively to their teachers and many are very willing to offer answers and share ideas in a variety of situations. Many pupils communicate confidently with each other in whole class sessions and in paired and group work. By upper key stage 2 most pupils extend their responses well.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in their reading skills in English. They develop as independent learners, and read meaningfully with expression and to a standard that is appropriate to their age and ability. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read fluently, accurately and with good understanding. They discuss their books effectively, with a good comprehension, expressing and justifying their opinions well. The majority have a clear preference of favourite genres and authors.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils write independently for a range of purposes. They generally punctuate their work appropriately. Most pupils across key stage 2 write in a wide range of styles and genres. They write well in response to class topics and novels. The more able pupils develop a wide vocabulary and sustain, develop and extend their ideas successfully.

Most pupils' speaking and listening skills in Welsh are developing appropriately in the Foundation Phase. The majority of pupils in key stage 2 understand simple instructions and the incidental Welsh used by staff. However, many pupils use a limited range of sentence patterns and their pronunciation is not always accurate. Reading and writing skills in Welsh are at an early stage of development.

Across the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 many pupils are using their thinking skills well as they plan and resolve problems together. This has a positive effect on their learning and the standards they achieve.

Results of teachers' assessments at the expected level (outcome 5+) at the end of the Foundation Phase were above the averages for the family of schools and Wales in language, literacy and communications and compared favourably in mathematical

development and personal and social, wellbeing and cultural diversity. In comparison with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school was in the top 50% in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, and the core subject indicator. The school was in the bottom 50% for personal and social, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

At the higher level than expected (outcome 6+), the school was above the averages for the family and Wales in language, literacy and communications and mathematical development and in line with family and national averages for personal and social, wellbeing and cultural diversity. The school was in the top 50% in all areas of learning.

Results of teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2, at the expected level (level 4+), for the last two out of the four years, have been high in comparison with the family and Wales averages. In comparison with similar schools over the same period, in terms of the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school was in the top 50% in all of the core subjects.

In the higher levels than expected (level 5+) at the end of key stage 2 in 2012, the school was in the top 50% of similar schools in English, mathematics and science.

The difference between the achievement of girls and boys at the expected level (level 4+) in most areas of learning is reducing over time. However, girls continue to outperform the boys in literacy at the higher level than expected. In the last two years the performance of pupils at the end of key stage 2 who are entitled to receive free school meals has made a significant improvement.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy in the school environment.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to develop a healthy lifestyle. They are well aware of how to achieve this through eating appropriately and getting regular exercise. Most pupils appreciate that this has a positive effect on their wellbeing and development.

Nearly all pupils have high standards of behaviour and most socialise and play together happily. During many lessons, nearly all pupils are industrious and enthusiastic; they work together well and maintain a high level of concentration for long periods of time. They are polite and respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. This contributes positively towards creating an ethos of learning. The school has a wide range of links with the community which further develops the pupils' social and communication skills and prepares them well for life and work outside school.

Members of the school council represent the views of other pupils well and are actively involved in decision-making. For example, they decided on and purchased playground equipment after analysing responses to their pupil questionnaires.

Most pupils arrive punctually and the school's attendance rate is above that of other similar schools.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. It has a clear focus on progressively developing pupils' skills knowledge and understanding. Teachers plan together to provide interesting and challenging lessons that match the needs and interests of most pupils. They plan well to encourage pupils of all abilities to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT in all areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in key stage 2 analyse historic parish records to learn about the different occupations of the men of Risca in bygone days.

Pupils' experiences are enriched by a good range of visits for example, the older pupils visit Stratford upon Avon as part of their study of William Shakespeare. Many pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities that develop specific skills in sports, gardening and music.

Provision for the promotion of the Welsh language is appropriate. There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills outside their Welsh lessons. Provision for pupils to develop their understanding of the history and culture of Wales is limited.

The school has good arrangements in place for the promotion of sustainable development across the curriculum. The school's strategy, along with the enthusiasm of the eco club, further promotes pupils' understanding of current issues well, for example their understanding of global warming. The school's provision for global citizenship is sound.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The relationship between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils is cordial and mutually respectful. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, deliver their lessons at a good pace and are able to use questioning well to promote pupils' thinking and communication effectively. Most teachers make good use of resources, including interactive whiteboards and tablet computers to enliven their lessons. Many teachers plan lessons well to build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills. In the few instances where teaching is less good, the pace of delivery is too slow and pupils do not engage well with the lesson.

The school has thorough procedures to assess pupils' work. Teachers make effective use of the assessments to identify and provide individual pupil support. There is a secure system for evaluating pupils' work regularly and their progress is monitored using a computerised tracking system. However, tracking individual pupil progress over time is less effective. Teachers mark all pupils' work regularly. Their comments are supportive and often help pupils to measure their progress towards their targets. Assessment for learning strategies are developing appropriately across the school. However, there are limited opportunities for a minority of pupils to judge their own progress. The end-of-year reports to parents are informative and well written.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community which promotes and supports pupils' health and wellbeing effectively throughout the curriculum. The importance of developing a healthy lifestyle is a strong feature of the school.

The school's provision to promote pupils' personal and social education is successful. The school provides well for pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development. Induction arrangements for new pupils are clear and the thorough transfer arrangements to secondary education are well established.

There are good systems in place for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality. There are well-established and clear procedures for dealing with any inappropriate behaviour or bullying.

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

The school arranges very effective provision to support individual and groups of pupils with additional learning needs. The procedures fully meet statutory requirements. There are good links with specialist external agencies and early intervention strategies help to provide appropriate support for individual pupils. The individual education plans identify clear targets, which are reviewed regularly to track the pupils' progress and to identify next steps in their learning.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a happy and inclusive community where every pupil has equal access to the educational and social provision. The school places a good emphasis on respect and, celebrating diversity. This helps to create a nurturing and tolerant environment.

The school maintains its accommodation well. Staff use their classrooms and additional learning areas effectively to promote pupils' learning. Displays across the school promote pupils' work extensively and contribute well to their learning. Facilities for outdoor learning are good and provide a variety of experiences particularly for the Foundation Phase. There is an extensive range of learning resources which are appropriate for the whole age range and ability. The provision and use of ICT equipment is particularly effective.

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

The headteacher and senior management team provide clear leadership that creates a strong sense of purpose. They focus successfully on pupils' wellbeing and developing high standards in literacy and numeracy. This has a positive impact on standards throughout the school. Almost all staff have subject or other specific responsibilities and collaborate well as a team to improve teaching and learning. Staff are clear about their roles and have regular meetings that support the school's work effectively. There are good procedures to manage the performance of staff.

Governors support the school well and link appropriately with specific subject teachers to inform their knowledge of learning activities. They receive and comment on reports and plans for school improvement regularly. This helps them to fulfil their roles effectively. Governors have a developing understanding of school performance data.

The school makes good progress in addressing local and national priorities such as improving pupils' skills, developing the Foundation Phase and meeting the needs of more able pupils.

Improving quality: Good

Planning for improvement is a strength of the school.

Throughout the year the school conducts a wide ranging programme that includes observations of learning and teaching, talking to pupils, scrutinising work and analysing performance data. This provides comprehensive first hand evidence that contributes to informative self-evaluation reports. The effective self-evaluation arrangements lead to clear and appropriate school improvement targets. Actions resulting from self-evaluation activities have led to improved pupil performance in important skills, such as reading and writing. Current plans to improve the provision for and use of ICT are innovative and have already improved both standards and provision.

Staff collaborate effectively within the school and with other professional learning communities. These networks have a positive influence on planning, moderating assessments and on developing other teaching strategies and principles. Recently, the school has identified the need to raise pupils' standards of numeracy. As a result, the school is beginning to work with schools in a neighbouring authority in order to become a part of the learning community on appropriate strategies for improving provision.

Partnership working: Good

There are positive relationships with most parents. The school maintains this partnership through regular consultation meetings, other briefings and through the work of the Parent Teacher Association. Parents value the ready availability of class teachers to discuss any concerns. Communication about provision and progress for learners with additional learning needs is good.

There are effective planning arrangements with partner schools. The headteacher works closely with the headteacher of Ty Isaf Infant School to put in place common teaching approaches for literacy and other skills. There are good joint arrangements with partner secondary and other primary schools in the area which improves the shared understanding of assessment and learning. Effective arrangements include primary and secondary teachers and pupils visiting and working with each other to assist the transfer of pupils at the end of key stage 2.

The school works closely with the local authority and there are productive links to maximise access to specialist services and centrally organised provision for pupils with special or additional needs.

Resource management: Good

The headteacher and staff manage all resources skilfully and the school's expenditure is monitored regularly and appropriately. The Governing Body oversee the expenditure and are very mindful that the school's expenditure decisions link well with priorities for improvement.

The school has an effective level of staffing to teach the curriculum successfully, and ensures that staff make the best use of their expertise and experience. Planning, preparation and assessment time is organised effectively. The support staff fulfil their roles well and make a valuable contribution to the work and life of the school. The performance management arrangements are very thorough and have a considerable effect on standards.

The school gives good value for money because it works very effectively as a learning community and ensures good outcomes for pupils.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The Foundation Phase

At the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, pupil attainment overall at the expected outcome (outcome 5 or above) in language, literature and communication skills was above the family, local authority and national averages. In mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity attainment was comparable to the family and, local authority averages but above the national average.

Attainment at the higher outcome (outcome 6) in language, literature and communication skills and mathematical development was above the family, local authority and national averages, but in line with all these comparators in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

The school performs well in relation to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals. Its performance in 2012 places it in the upper 50% of similar schools for the development of pupils' language and mathematical skills, although it is in the lowest 50% for the development of pupils' personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

Girls outperform the boys in their language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development as well as their personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity at outcome 5 and the higher outcome (outcome 6).

Key stage 2

The proportion of pupils who achieve level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science is higher than the family and national averages, and has improved in three out of the last four years.

In 2012, pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science in combination (the core subject indicator) was higher than the average for the family of schools and national averages. Performance in reading and writing has been higher than the average for the family of schools in three out of the last four years. There is an upward trend of improvement since 2010. The percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level (level 4) in English has continually improved over the last four years with all pupils achieving at least the expected level 4 at least the expected level 4 in 2012.

The outcomes of 11-year-old pupils in English, mathematics and science compare favourably to those of other schools based on the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils in key stage 2 who achieved the expected level in English, mathematics and science in combination (the core subject indicator) places the school among the top 25%.

At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level than expected (level 5 or above), has been inconsistent over the last four years.

At the end of key stage 2, the girls outperform the boys at the expected level. This has been a trend for the last four years. However, in 2012 the boys outperformed the girls at the higher level in mathematics and science.

Many pupils with additional learning needs, together with those who receive free school meals, make good progress in English, mathematics and science during their time in school.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Pupil satisfaction report

Questionnaires were completed by a 105 pupils in key stage 2.

Pupil responses compare favourably with those in other schools across Wales.

All pupils agree that there are plenty of chances in school for them to take regular exercise and there are enough books, equipment, and computers to do their work. Almost all pupils feel safe in school and say that the teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress. Most pupils believe that they are doing well in school and indicate that they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard. Most also say that the school deals well with any bullying. Many pupils know who to talk to if they are worried or upset, they indicate that other children behave well and they can get their work done. Many pupils say that nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time.

Parent satisfaction report

Fifty-two parents or carers completed the questionnaire.

The responses of parents from Risca Primary are generally more negative and a few are significantly lower than those received from parents in other schools in Wales.

In particular, parents are less positive about:

- how satisfied they are with the school and how well run it is run;
- whether pupils behave well in school;
- whether children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs;
- whether there is a good range of activities including trips or visits;
- how safe pupils are in school; and
- how well pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education.

All parents or carers agree that the staff expect their child to work hard and to do their best. Nearly all say that the school has helped their child to settle in well when they started in school, that their child likes school and is making good progress. Most think that teaching is good and say that the school encourages their child to be healthy. They understand the procedures for dealing with complaints. Parents or carers agree that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility.

Many parents or carers are of the opinion that the school is well run. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions and problems. Many say they are satisfied with the school, agree that the pupils behave well and that their child is safe in school. They think that staff treat all children fairly and with respect. Many indicated that the homework given builds well on what their child learns in school. Many feel well informed about their child's progress, and agree that their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular needs. They agree that there is a good range of activities including trips or visits and think that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Eleri Hurley	Reporting Inspector
Chris Dolby	Team Inspector
Gregory Owens	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Clive Evans	Peer Inspector
Jayne Arthur	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.