



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

**St Illtyd's Primary
Llanhilleth
Abertillery
NP13 2JT**

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.

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Context

St Illtyd's Primary School is situated in Llanilleth, near Abertillery in Blaenau Gwent. The school opened in September 2004 after the amalgamation of three primary schools. The school is at the heart of a major community regeneration project. Most pupils come from the local communities. A significant proportion of pupils are transported to school by bus from Brynithel, a more remote housing estate consisting of pre-fabricated houses, situated on a mountainside. The school and surrounding areas have significant levels of deprivation. Around 45% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the local and national averages.

The school caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age. There are 201 pupils on roll, including 35 children who attend the nursery in the mornings. Children enter the nursery the term following their third birthday. Around 98% of pupils are of white ethnic origin and all speak English at home. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are on the school's register of additional learning needs, which is above the national average. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A very few pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority and three pupils speak English as an additional language.

There are seven full-time teachers, including the headteacher who was appointed in September 2004. The school was last inspected in March 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for St Illtyd's Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4,201 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Blaenau Gwent is £5,429 and the minimum is £3,194. St Illtyd's Primary School is 10th out of the 27 primary schools in Blaenau Gwent in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

This is a good school because:

- many pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school;
- most pupils have a positive attitude to their work and feel safe and secure;
- the quality of teaching is good;
- teaching assistants provide high levels of support for pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs;
- behaviour is managed well;
- effective care, support and guidance procedures contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing; and
- the school provides a wide variety of stimulating learning experiences that positively promote pupils' engagement.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and senior management team provide effective leadership and the school has a strong commitment to promoting improvement;
- the school is receptive to new ideas that improve its provision, in particular those that promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills;
- the school has made good progress in implementing most of the recommendations of the previous inspection; and
- the governing body is well informed about the performance of the school and understands the issues that affect it.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

- R1 improve the performance of more able pupils and raise standards in Welsh;
- R2 provide suitable opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum;
- R3 ensure that the new tracking systems are fully embedded; and
- R4 improve the school development plan by including specific measurable targets that are linked to pupils' standards.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many pupils enter school with communication, mathematical and personal skills below those normally expected for their age. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils achieve good standards and this is a considerable achievement given their attainment on entry to school. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good and occasionally very good progress in relation to their targets. However, more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Most pupils entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with their ability.

In key stage 1, pupils' performance in mathematics and science generally compares well with that of pupils in other similar schools. Pupils' performance in English is not as strong.

Over the past four years, pupils' performance in key stage 2 has been variable in English and mathematics and has often not compared well to that in other similar schools. However, high numbers of pupils with additional learning needs have often adversely affected the school's results.

Most pupils achieve good reading, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology skills and generally apply these well in their work across the curriculum. Most pupils' oracy skills are developing well. Most make good progress in listening carefully, acquiring a wider vocabulary and in speaking clearly and confidently. Most pupils develop their understanding of sounds well, they read well in groups and they explain the texts to others. However, more able pupils do not always read texts that challenge them appropriately. In English lessons, many pupils write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Many pupils respond appropriately to instructions during Welsh lessons. However, nearly all pupils find it difficult to transfer these skills to other areas of the curriculum or to use Welsh outside the classroom through the school day.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. Their behaviour is exemplary and they show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils feel safe in school. Most are generally keen to participate in the lessons. For example, many are happy to speak in front of the class to give their point of view or to respond to a question.

Most pupils show a good understanding of how to stay healthy, through taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. Attendance, at just over 92%, is good and above that of similar schools. While most pupils arrive punctually, a very few are regularly late.

Members of the school council are enthusiastic about the role they play. They are involved appropriately in improving a few aspects of school life but are not yet part of the decision-making process of the school. The eco-committee and junior road safety officers successfully promote initiatives, such as road safety and fair trade within the school.

Most pupils have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Most show respect and concern towards adults and their peers and take responsibility for their actions. Many pupils work well in groups. A majority of pupils are developing effective thinking skills that help them to improve their own learning.

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

The school offers a good range of learning experiences which engage nearly all pupils. A particularly strong feature is the amount of practical, research and creative opportunities offered to pupils. These sessions enhance pupils' key and social skills very effectively.

Teachers plan thoroughly and identify clear aims and objectives. They take good account of developing pupils' skills across the curriculum. However, they do not always adapt work well enough to meet the needs of more able pupils or provide enough opportunities for pupils to write independently at length across the curriculum.

The promotion of the Welsh heritage and culture is a positive feature of the school. Pupils' awareness is developed effectively through lessons and celebrations. The school encourages appropriately the use of Welsh and the majority of staff model the language well. However, pupils are not always encouraged to use Welsh outside of lessons.

Provision for education for sustainable development permeates everyday life in St Illtyd's School and pupils are involved in a wide range of activities. The school acts sustainably through an impressive range of initiatives. In addition to a range of recycling schemes, it is the centre of the Rag Bag clothing collection scheme. Links with France, Zimbabwe and Ghana help to promote pupils' understanding of global citizenship appropriately.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding examples. Lessons are well structured and all have a clear learning focus. Teachers and support staff establish excellent relationships with pupils. All staff have good subject knowledge and use a variety of teaching approaches in lessons and activities. In most lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are well motivated and actively engaged. There is a good balance of adult-directed and independent activities. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this contributes to a calm teaching environment. Although teachers support pupils well, they do not consistently challenge the more able to achieve their best. Teaching assistants are deployed

purposefully to support individuals and groups and they make valuable contributions to pupils' learning.

Assessment for learning strategies are integrated effectively into many lessons. Teachers and support staff ensure that pupils know what they will be learning and provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their progress, during the lesson and in plenary sessions.

The school is in the process of implementing a new computerised system to track pupils' progress, but this is not yet embedded. Teachers help pupils to set targets in order to improve their work. As a result, a majority of pupils know how well they are progressing. Pupils comment sensitively on each other's work. Many teachers mark pupils' work effectively.

Teachers provide detailed and helpful reports to parents about their child's progress and wellbeing. Parents are given opportunities to provide written responses to reports and useful consultations with parents take place regularly.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school delivers good provision for the health and wellbeing of all pupils. It continuously monitors pupils' levels of wellbeing and provides extra support where needed. Many specialist services and outside agencies also give effective support to pupils.

The school is a very caring, well-ordered community where everyone feels valued. It has good systems in place to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils receive beneficial support when they start school and are encouraged to take an active role in school and community life.

The school has an effective framework for personal and social education and good arrangements to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

The schools' provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Staff meet a range of complex needs well. They identify additional needs early and put in place appropriate interventions. Staff work diligently, using a range of strategies to ensure all pupils' make progress. Individual education plans contain appropriate targets and are reviewed and evaluated regularly.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a fully inclusive ethos. It treats everyone with respect, regardless of gender, social background, race or faith. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to diversity and equality. All pupils have equal opportunities to access all areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The school provides a safe, caring and very welcoming environment for all pupils. The building and extensive grounds are well maintained. Rooms are used creatively

and effectively to support teaching and learning. The development of the outside areas, the garden and the Foundation Phase area has been extremely effective in improving pupils' learning opportunities. The high standard of wall displays in corridors and community areas enhance the learning environment. Overall, there is a good supply of quality learning resources, which are greatly appreciated by pupils.

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

The school is well led. The headteacher, management team and governors are successful in providing a strategic vision for the school and its community. The headteacher provides clear, sensitive and caring leadership and has high expectations of staff and pupils. These, together with his open style of management, lead to a very good whole-school ethos that promotes improvements in provision and standards well. Effective management team meetings, staff meetings and sound performance management structures are successful in improving learning and teaching.

The governing body is an appropriate representation of the community it serves. Governors challenge the school effectively and support the school conscientiously. Through visits and regular meetings with staff, they have a good understanding of standards within a range of areas. They also know about the wide range of initiatives the school is developing. Governors take all reasonable steps to inform pupils, parents and members of staff of the procedures for making a complaint or appeal and respond promptly.

The school is making good progress in introducing many initiatives that meet local and national priorities. For example, the introduction of the Foundation Phase and a skills-based curriculum at key stage 2 are both having a positive impact on pupils' standards. The school, through its support programmes, addresses well the national priority of raising pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation procedures are developing well. Staff use a comprehensive range of evidence as part of this process. The monitoring of work in classes and the good involvement of pupils and parents in self-evaluation has enabled the school to make a mostly accurate assessment of strengths and areas for improvement. Teacher assessment data is analysed carefully and used to judge how well the school performs compared with the performance of other similar schools and local and national averages.

The outcomes of self-evaluation are used well to determine priorities in planning for improvement, as well as, informing targets for the performance of teachers. Overall, school development planning is effective and supported well through the allocation of resources. However, success criteria in the school development plan are not always measurable or linked well enough to raising pupils' standards.

Staff are involved in successful networks of professional practice with other local schools. There are also beneficial arrangements for staff to share good practice across the school. These arrangements have led to a consistent approach to behaviour management and have helped to improve the school's provision for reading and writing.

Partnership working: Good

The school works in partnership with a range of agencies, including the local authority and statutory and non-statutory services. The school has effective links with other local schools, including its partner primary schools, as part of the local cluster arrangements. The transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools is well organised and ensures that pupils settle well when they arrive in their new school. There are good joint quality assurance procedures to moderate pupils' standards at the end of key stage 2.

Strong partnerships with the local community and parents make a valuable contribution to widening the choices for pupils. There are very good links with the adjacent community first centre; a range of visitors contribute to school activities and the school takes an active part in a wide range of community ventures. These partnerships help to enrich and support all pupils' learning and wellbeing. Pupils benefit from parents and carers and older people in the community assisting with learning activities, such as listening to pupils read.

Resource management: Good

All members of staff work together well and share their expertise for the benefit of the pupils. The teamwork amongst staff permeates all the school's work and has led to improvements in teaching and curricular provision.

The school organises planning, preparation and assessment time extremely well and the designated teacher has created a stimulating and effective skills-based curriculum for this purpose.

The school has sufficient resources to meet the needs of pupils, which it manages well. Managers link financial resources to priorities in the school development plan and they monitor the budget regularly.

In view of the good standards achieved by many pupils by the end of key stage 2, the quality of teaching and the curricular developments, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In key stage 1 in 2011, when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school was in the third quartile for English and the second for the core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level in English, mathematics and science in combination). The school was in the top 25% of similar schools for mathematics and science. Over the last four years trends show that generally the school performs well and is often in the upper 50% of similar schools in all areas, apart from English in 2010 and 2011.

End of key stage 2 assessments in 2011 place the school in the upper quartile for English and the core subject indicator when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school was in the upper 50% of similar schools for mathematics and science. Trends over the last four years have fluctuated in the core subject areas and, in two of the four years, the school was placed in the third quartile for English, mathematics and the core subject indicator.

Pupils' attainment for the higher levels at both key stages fluctuates and is usually lower than national, local and family averages.

Overall, in recent years the school does not compare well to its family of schools, those schools which face similar challenges. However, over the last few years there has been a significant number of pupils with complex learning difficulties in both key stages. Nevertheless, most of these pupils, although not achieving the expected levels, made good progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2.

Over recent years in key stage 1, the attainment of girls at the expected level 2 and at the higher level has been above that of boys. In key stage 2, boys have generally performed better than girls in two of the last three years at the expected level 4, while girls have generally performed better than boys at the higher level 5.

Almost all pupils entitled to free school meals make good progress in both key stages. Most pupils identified with additional learning needs make good and often very good progress. Those pupils who receive extra support for literacy achieve well. However, more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to the questionnaire for parents

We received 27 responses from parents and carers.

Nearly all parents say that they are satisfied with the school and that it is well run. They all note that their children like the school and that they feel the children are safe there. Nearly all parents say that they are well informed about the progress their children make at the school. Most say that pupils are well behaved and nearly all believe that staff treat all children fairly and with respect. All parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem and all say that their child was helped to settle in well when they first started school. A very few say that they do not think their child is well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their learning and that they do not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Responses to the questionnaire for pupils

We received 84 responses from pupils.

All pupils agree that they feel safe in school and all know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. All pupils say the school teaches them how to keep healthy and all think that there are lots of opportunities for them to get regular exercise. They feel that they are doing well at school and all say that the teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. All say that other children behave well and that they can get their work done and that children behave well at playtime and lunch time. All pupils also say that the school deals well with any instances of bullying.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Colin Skinner	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Simon Roberts	Peer Inspector
Nigel Roberts (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.