



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

**Meadowlane Primary School
Heol Maes Eirwg
St Mellons
Cardiff
CF3 0JZ**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2011: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Context

Meadowlane Primary School is a community school for boys and girls aged three to eleven years. All of the 253 pupils come from the area of St Mellons, which is on the eastern outskirts of Cardiff. The number on pupils on roll has varied over recent years but numbers are now increasing and expected to rise considerably over the next few years. The school building has accommodation for up to 500 pupils. There are nine classes, three of which include pupils from two age groups. A family centre working with children, parents and carers shares the school's accommodation.

The school describes its catchment area as being economically disadvantaged. Around 50% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This figure is much higher than the national average. English is the main language spoken in the homes of most pupils. Around 18% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 12% of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school has identified 61% of pupils as having special educational needs, which is much more than the national average.

The school's awards include the Basic Skills Quality Mark, stage 5 of the Healthy Schools Scheme and the Eco School Green Flag.

The last school inspection was in May 2005. The headteacher has been in post since November 2007.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Meadowlane Primary School is £3,645, which compares with a maximum of £14,067 and a minimum of £2,787 for primary schools in Cardiff. The school has the 35th highest budget per pupil out of the 102 primary schools in Cardiff.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress in line with their abilities and achieve good standards by the end of key stage 2;
- pupils' attitudes to learning are good and the behaviour of pupils is very good; and
- the strong supportive school ethos greatly enhances pupils' wellbeing and learning.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because there is effective leadership by the headteacher and senior management team. The school has a good track record of maintaining and improving standards and the quality of provision. Performance data is used well to monitor pupils' progress and plan for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, Meadowlane Primary School needs to:

- R1 continue to raise standards in key stage 1;
- R2 improve the accuracy of pupils' writing in key stage 2;
- R3 improve the planning of the curriculum for foundation subjects so that it is matched fully to pupils' learning needs;
- R4 ensure more progression in the planning for skills; and
- R5 continue to improve attendance rates.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor progress in addressing the recommendations and report their findings to Estyn.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children enter the school with skills below those normally expected for children of their age. Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well in work across the curriculum. Many pupils recall their previous learning well and acquire new skills systematically as they progress through the school. Pupils with additional learning needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their abilities.

Pupils listen attentively in lessons. Most speak clearly using a range of vocabulary, which they often use well to communicate their ideas and opinions. Generally, pupils use their reading and writing skills well in work across the curriculum. Many pupils read accurately and fluently and become competent in searching for information. While pupils usually write well in different forms and for different purposes, in key stage 2, there are often inaccuracies in their spelling, punctuation and use of grammar. Throughout the school, pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and they apply these well in their work across the curriculum.

In key stage 1, performance in the core subject indicator (the expected level for pupils of seven years of age) shows a steady improving trend for the past five years. However, results are generally below the average for the family of schools and well below national averages. Results are in the lower 50% of those for similar schools. A small but significant minority of pupils join the school at different times during the key stage. The performance of the majority of pupils who attend the school throughout key stage 1 is good and compares very well to that of other similar schools.

Performance at the higher level (level 3) at the end of key stage 1 was lower than family averages until 2010 when performance was higher in all core subjects. While the difference between boys' and girls' performance fluctuates, boys outperformed girls in 2010. In this key stage, pupils in receipt of free school meals do not achieve as well as others.

In key stage 2, over the last five years, performance has shown an improving trend, particularly in English. In all of the core subjects, results are above the family average. Results are in the higher 50% of those for similar schools.

Performance at the higher level (level 5) at the end of key stage 2 is above or close to family averages. While the difference between boys' and girls' performance fluctuates, girls significantly outperformed boys in all areas in 2010. In this key stage, pupils in receipt of free school meals achieve at least as well as others.

Most pupils gain oral skills in the Welsh language but there is not enough progression in their learning. Pupils' reading and writing skills in Welsh are at an early stage of development.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils demonstrate high levels of emotional wellbeing and display enthusiasm and pride in their school. They feel safe and happy and are confident to approach an adult if they have any concerns. Almost all pupils' behaviour, care and respect for others are very good.

Most pupils are very well motivated and engaged in their learning. They participate well in lessons and in the wider life of the school, including extra-curricular activities, the school council and posts of responsibilities. This includes working as peer supporters where they make a valuable contribution to other pupils' wellbeing.

Pupils have a good level of involvement in the school and local community. They are well involved in decision-making about their life in school and feel that their opinions are valued. They know the importance of regular exercise and eating healthy foods. While pupils' problem solving skills and skills in improving their own learning are developing, these are not fully influential in their learning.

The level of pupils' attendance has improved well over the past three years. However, at around 91% it remains below the average for Wales and ranks in the bottom 25% of that for similar schools. Most pupils arrive on time for school.

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

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school's rich and varied range of learning experiences offers stimulating opportunities for learning that engage pupils' interests very well. A wide range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' learning.

Overall, teachers' planning is comprehensive and detailed. Planning for the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase and the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in key stage 2 is good. However, in key stage 2, the planning of work in the foundation subjects is not adapted well enough to match all pupils' learning needs as they progress through the school. School plans for the development of pupils' communication, numeracy and ICT skills in work across the curriculum in key stage 2 are not specific enough to ensure that these skills contribute to the raising of pupils' standards. The provision for Welsh language development lacks enough progression throughout the school.

Throughout the school, pupils have many opportunities to work in pairs and collaborate as part of a group, which contributes well to the development of their independent learning skills.

The good provision for sustainability and global citizenship helps pupils to understand the role they and others play in society as well as to know more about the wider world.

Teaching: Good

Most teaching motivates pupils well and secures their good progress in learning. The very good relationships between adults and pupils and the highly effective encouragement and support that pupils receive contribute very effectively to their progress and wellbeing.

Teachers use a range of approaches and resources appropriately, including very effective use of the outdoor environment to engage pupils' interests. In a majority of lessons, teachers' explanations are clear and pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking through effective questioning. Well-planned adult support from teaching assistants and volunteers makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

A recently completed comprehensive assessment system tracks pupils' progress throughout the school. Although the regular marking of work celebrates pupils' success in learning, few comments offer advice on what pupils need to do to improve their work. Pupils' knowledge of their own targets for improvement and their involvement in peer assessment are developing but not yet influential in their learning. Reports to parents are detailed. There are frequent opportunities for parents to meet with teachers and discuss their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The care, support and guidance offered to pupils are very effective and contribute greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school, their high levels of wellbeing and willingness to learn.

The provision for pupils' health and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong features of the school's work.

Attendance rates have improved as a result of effective initiatives, such as the attendance champion's league and weekly class awards.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Teachers diagnose difficulties at an early stage. A wide range of intervention and support approaches is successful in helping these pupils make progress. Effective arrangements also exist with specialist services and outside agencies to provide pupils with a high level of support and guidance. Clearly targeted support for vulnerable pupils has resulted in good progress in their learning, attitudes and behaviour.

The school fully meets safeguarding requirements.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school's mission statement to 'Make yourself proud' strongly permeates all areas of school life creating an exceptional ethos of support, respect and harmony throughout the school. This ethos has helped pupils to gain high levels of self-esteem and self-worth and to have a strong regard for the feelings of others, and has been very influential in helping to raise standards. Pupils receive equal access to all areas of provision.

Staff and pupils make full use of the extensive, attractive and very well-maintained indoor and outdoor environment. This environment contributes greatly to pupils' learning, independence and wellbeing. Shared use of these facilities by a range of organisations contributes very well to the school's strong position within the community.

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

Leadership: Good

The headteacher has been very influential in developing and leading a strong supportive learning ethos that staff, governors, parents and pupils value highly. The senior leadership team and all members of staff share a clear common sense of purpose and the school is making a considerable contribution to tackling social disadvantage.

Governors are committed to pupils' welfare and actively support and challenge the school to improve. They are well informed about the school through their regular visits and the informative reports they receive, including data about how well the school compares with other similar schools.

The school has made good progress in meeting most national and local priorities. In particular, the Foundation Phase is developing well and arrangements to ensure pupils' wellbeing are highly effective.

Improving quality: Good

The school has well-embedded procedures for self-evaluation and reviewing progress across the curriculum. Staff, parents and pupils contribute well to the process. Evidence includes observations of learning and teaching as well as samples of pupils' work. Teacher assessment data is analysed carefully and used to judge how well the school performs compared with other similar schools and local and national averages. Overall, the school has made a mostly accurate assessment of its strengths and areas for improvement.

All staff have yearly performance reviews, which help to identify their training needs. The training of staff has had a positive impact on teaching and learning, especially in areas of literacy and communication, where standards have risen since the last inspection.

Priorities for improvement are clearly identified in effective action plans. These plans are supported well by the careful allocation of resources.

There is an effective culture of collaboration and team work between staff, and the school takes an active role in areas, such as traffic management improvements, to keep pupils safe. However, professional learning communities within the school are at an early stage of development.

Partnership working: Good

The school benefits from a large number of strategic partnerships, which contribute very well to pupils' progress and wellbeing. Staff work particularly well with parents, who are regarded as vital partners in pupils' learning. Parents feel welcome, have opportunities to be involved in the school and value the way staff respond to their views and opinions. There are also beneficial links with the community and a large number of organisations, including teacher training institutions, churches, charities and sports clubs.

Good induction arrangements help pupils settle quickly in the school. Pupils' smooth transfer to one of a number of secondary schools is assisted by careful transition planning. There are good links with local primary schools to share good practice and ensure the consistency of teachers' assessments. The school works closely with the local authority to implement a good range of initiatives to support and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Resource management: Good

The school has good levels of staffing to deliver the curriculum effectively. The management and deployment of staff are effective. Staff make appropriate use of the time allocated for planning, preparation and assessment.

The school is well resourced. Additional grants and donations help to provide funds to increase the delegated budget. Spending decisions are well matched to the school's needs and reviewed regularly.

The quality and use of the school accommodation are outstanding. Pupils benefit greatly from their stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment.

In view of the efficient and effective use the school makes of its funding and the good outcomes attained by pupils at the end of key stage 2, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Twenty parents attended the parents' meeting and sixty parents completed the questionnaires. Overall, parents express a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of education provided by the school. They report improvements in their children's attitudes to learning since the introduction of the new mission statement. Parents report that staff are very approachable if parents have concerns or questions. Parents feel well informed about their children's achievements through regular meetings with teachers and helpful end-of-year reports.

Ninety-seven pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Inspectors also talked to individuals and representative groups of pupils across the school. These pupils say that they are happy, enjoy school and know whom they can talk to if they are worried or upset. They feel safe and believe that staff treat them equally and with respect. Pupils think that the school provides plenty of opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles and that they have enough equipment, including computers, to do their work.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Wendy Young	Reporting Inspector
Chris Dolby (AI)	Additional Inspector
Catherine Jenkins	Lay Inspector
Jon-Paul Guy	Peer Inspector
Paul Tucker (Deputy 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 Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	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:

Key stage 1	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