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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on
Perthcelyn Primary School**

**Glamorgan Street
Perthcelyn
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF45 3RJ**

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Mr P Mathias

Under contract to

**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

Perthcelyn Primary School is situated in the once mining community of the same name near Penrhiwceibr in the Cynon Valley. The local authority (LA) is Rhondda Cynon Taf. Currently, there are 155 pupils between the ages of three and eleven years of age who attend the school. Of these 19 are of nursery age and attend on a full-time basis. There is a unit for key stage 1 pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Six pupils attend this facility. A further 10 pupils attend the key stage 2 unit for pupils with complex learning difficulties. Pupils in these units travel to the school from a wider area. There are five mainstream classes.

On entry to the nursery, many children have levels of basic skills and experience which are well below those expected and found amongst children of this age. Nearly all who attend the main school are from the local area where there are high levels of unemployment and social and economic disadvantage. The locality is designated a Communities First area and is considered to be a very deprived area. Sixty-nine percent of pupils are considered eligible for free school meals. This is a very high figure and well above local and national averages. The school was last inspected in October 2004 when the previous headteacher was in post. The current headteacher took up his post at the beginning of the term. The number on roll is a little below that at the time of the previous inspection

Nearly all learners come from English speaking Welsh backgrounds. No pupil has Welsh as a first language and no pupil has support in English as a second language. Fifty-two percent are considered to have some degree of additional learning needs (ALN) and 12% have statements of special educational needs (SEN). These are very high figures. Two children are 'looked after' by the LA. No pupil was excluded in the previous school year.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark (2), the Investors in People Award and Green Flag Status.

The individual school budget per pupil for Perthcelyn Primary school is £4,942 which compares with a maximum of £9,525 and a minimum of £2,553 for primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The school has the 10th highest budget per pupil out of the 116 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- there is an inclusive and supportive ethos which is outstanding;
- provision for those who attend the units is of a high standard;
- all staff have high expectations of pupils and of each other;
- many pupils make good progress overall, often from low starting points; and
- nearly all are willing and able to take on responsibilities.

Prospects for improvement

- there has been good progress in addressing the issues of the last inspection;
- the school is purposefully led and the senior management team is heavily committed to continuous improvement; and
- standards in the national teacher assessments are improving.

As a result, the inspection team is confident that the school will be able to make further improvements.

Recommendations

Inspectors have agreed with the school the following recommendations for improvement:

- R1 raise standards in the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum;
- R2 have higher expectations of what the more able or gifted and talented should achieve;
- R3 improve the range of opportunities for pupils to write extensively for a wider range of reasons and purposes; and
- R4 strengthen the role of the governing body so that it is well informed of the work of the school and constructively holds the professional leadership to account.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Over the last three years the performance of pupils aged seven and eleven in the national teacher assessments has fluctuated. Standards in English, mathematics and science are higher now than they were. Starting from a low base result in 2010 in key stage 1, the combined results with the unit pupils discounted were just below the local and national averages as they were in the individual subjects. The key stage 2 results followed a similar pattern although the combined results were above local and national averages. However, none reaching the higher level (level 5) in any of the three subjects.

When the results are compared to schools considered to be broadly similar, they should be treated with caution. They contain the results of pupils in the units. The school also has a very high proportion of those entitled to free school meals. In this school, the proportion entitled to free school meals is more than twice as much as that of the schools in the group with the lowest proportion of free school meals. In this comparison the results are below most of these schools.

Compared to the family of schools across Wales in which this school is placed, results were above most of these schools. In these assessments boys and girls performed about the same in key stage 1. In key stage 2 girls out performed boys. Overall, there is no consistent pattern in the relative performance of boys against girls. Generally, many learners, including those from the units, make good progress. In 2010 the school met the targets it had agreed with the LA.

Pupils make good progress in developing new skills. Most pupils are developing good speaking, reading and numeracy skills. By comparison, pupils' extended and creative writing skills are not as well developed. By the end of key stage 2 nearly all pupils display excellent ICT skills across the curriculum.

Overall, pupils' Welsh language skills are adequate. They are not developed consistently across the curriculum

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards learning. They show good levels of motivation and are keen to learn. Pupils are polite, courteous and work well together.

Behaviour within and around the school is good throughout the day. No pupil has been excluded in the history of the school.

Pupils' attendance levels compare favourably with similar schools and with that of the family of schools.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and have positive attitudes towards physical exercise and improving their diet. Many pupils support the healthy initiatives within the school and all parents agree that the school encourages a healthy lifestyle. Most pupils feel safe at school and know to whom they can talk if they are worried or upset.

The school's involvement with the community is good. Pupils gain good levels of knowledge, experience and confidence through it. Many pupils play a positive role in a wide range of activities in the local community and beyond.

The school council is well established and pupils are involved in making decisions on improving aspects of the school. They feel their opinions are considered and valued and act with maturity in the roles given. There is a good range of activities available for pupils to ensure they take an active role in the life of the school and community. This provides them with appropriate additional responsibilities.

By the end of key stage 2 most know what they need to do to be successful learners and how to work independently.

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

There are a wide range of stimulating and enriching learning experiences and activities which are enjoyed by all pupils. The thematic approach is used in planning, where possible, which enable skills and knowledge to be acquired in context. Specific provision of a modified curriculum for pupils within the ASD and CLD classes, suit their individual needs well.

The provision for the development of the skills led curriculum is in place and there is adequate provision for the development of the Welsh language. There are good features in the provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and pupils are given many opportunities to learn about the culture and traditions of their own area and of Wales in general.

Provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship is good. The school has gained 'Green Flag' status, and the eco committee is well organised. It is proactive in making decisions that have a clear influence on the life and work of the school.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good with some examples of excellent teaching in which flair and the use of very stimulating resources are important factors. Relationships between all adults and learners are very constructive. All learners try hard because they know that their efforts are valued by their teachers whose infectious enthusiasm makes learning fun.

Where there are some shortcomings opportunities are missed to extend learners' responses in Welsh and the most able are not sufficiently challenged to achieve high standards consistently.

The quality of assessment is good. Formal assessments are undertaken on a planned rolling programme. The data is collected systematically and pupils' progress is regularly tracked and monitored carefully. Further assessments are undertaken as necessary. The results are analysed and support target setting and the identification of appropriate strategies.

Staff continually monitor and assess during lessons using a variety of techniques including verbal and written comments. Teachers endeavour to ensure that pupils are given appropriately challenging tasks and that support and guidance is available as necessary to enable them to achieve their targets. However, the information is not always used so that the more able are sufficiently challenged. Pupils review their own and other pupils' work and are able to explain their decisions.

Staff regularly update records and provide all parents with information on their child's progress twice a year during formal meetings as well as an annual written report. Home/school liaison books are used for the exchange of further regular information and extra meetings are held when parents or school feel they are necessary.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The quality of care, support and guidance is good. The school has a good framework for personal and social education. Pupils are respected and valued. There are a wide range of initiatives which promote healthy living and wellbeing which involves both pupils and parents. Members of the community such as the local police officer and a number of health workers make an effective contribution to developing health and safety awareness. The school website, prospectus and open evenings provide parents with detailed information about the school. Induction and transition arrangements are well established.

Pupils' spiritual development is good. The atmosphere of reverence in whole school assemblies help to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social attitudes. There is good provision for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures.

Staff work successfully together to ensure that pupils benefit from appropriate individual and small group support on educational and other issues when necessary. The school is well supported by a wide range of specialist services. These provide regular on-going support and guidance as well as specialised input as necessary.

Arrangements for child protection are clear and effective. The headteacher is the designated person for the processes and a nominated governor provides support. All staff have received training and are conversant with all the appropriate guidelines. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding and carrying out suitable Criminal Record Bureau checks.

The quality of provision for pupils with ALN is good within the mainstream classes and in the ASD and CLD Classes. Through initial expressions of concern followed by rigorous testing and assessing procedures, the staff and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) identify pupils in need of additional support and swiftly ensure that appropriate long or short term help is accessed and provided. Targets are set and progress is regularly monitored to ensure continuous progress. ASD and CLD pupils are successfully integrated into mainstream classes whenever appropriate.

Parents of ALN pupils are regularly informed and staff try to ensure their full involvement at all stages. The school has just started to identify pupils who are gifted and talented in academic, creative and sporting aspects.

Learning environment: Good

The ethos within the school is an outstanding feature. It is fully inclusive and all pupils are treated equally within a conducive learning environment where all are highly valued. They show respect for each other and their different backgrounds. Diversity is regularly celebrated and the traditions of the small proportion of pupils from other backgrounds are also recognised.

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

The school is well led and all staff work effectively as a close knit and very committed team. All share high expectations for all learners to achieve well. They are given a clear sense of direction by a senior management team which is cohesive and very hard working. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future in which the continued drive to raise standards is central. All professional staff manage their areas of responsibility conscientiously and well.

The school is addressing local and national priorities successfully. The Foundation Phase has been thoughtfully introduced and provides a rich environment for children when they begin school. There is good provision for all to appreciate the importance of looking after the environment and conserving resources. The school works closely with other local schools for example to agree standards. It is regularly used by the LA to exemplify good practice in several areas of its work.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. The chair of governors gives it a very well informed steer. Governors have systematically reviewed their roles and have recently taken steps to begin to enable them to act more as a critical yet supportive friend of the professional management. However, currently they do not hold the leadership sufficiently to account.

Improving quality: Good

The school has undertaken a thorough and robust self evaluation of outcomes, provision, leadership and management. Strategies employed ensured staff involvement, input and ownership. Evidence from parental and pupil responses were also taken into account. The evidence gathered has led to a clear and well-constructed school development plan (SDP).

The SDP is thorough and identifies targets for improvement, implementation and monitoring responsibilities, success criteria, timescales, the actions necessary and the budget and resources required.

The school has effective arrangements for the continued professional development of all staff and their performance management.

There are effective links with external specialist support services. The ASD and CLD classes benefit from connections with the specialist comprehensive school and with other local schools. Currently there are no links with the family of schools across Wales to which this school belongs.

Partnership working: Good

The school has developed good partnerships. New parents and pupils are invited into the school and clear information is provided verbally and comprehensive introductory booklets provided. There are strong community focussed links such as the Pyramid Club with Mountain Ash Comprehensive School. Families are supported and become involved through the Mother and Baby Drop in Clinic, Speak Easy project, Language and Play and Number and Play.

Staff collaborate well so that learners build systematically on what they already know and can do. Regular discussions between teachers ensure that specific targets are prioritised, learning is reinforced and success criteria met. Parents are regularly informed and staff try to ensure their full involvement at all stages.

There are good transition arrangements with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. These include standardisation and moderation activities in English, mathematics and science and the transfer of relevant documentation.

Resource management: Good

There is an extensive range of resources in the school and they are managed and organised very effectively. They are used purposefully for the benefit of pupils. Space is exceptionally well utilised and priority is given to improving resources and outcomes for the needs of a wide range of pupils including those with ALN. Managers have responded appropriately to the conditions in the national agreement on 'Raising Standards and tackling Workload.'

In view of the careful allocation of resources and management of the budget as well as the good quality of education in which many learners achieve well, the school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Data report:

The data report is available on the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Response to parents' questionnaires

A minority of parents completed the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed very positive view of the school. All were satisfied with the school, that their children liked school and settled in well when they began. All thought that pupils behaved well and tried hard. All were happy that their children were encouraged to be healthy and were safe in school. All felt well informed and could approach the school if they needed to do so. They were familiar with what to do if they wished to complain. All thought that their children were helped to be mature and to take on responsibilities. They were happy with the way in which the school was run.

Very few parents expressed negative views. These related to the progress children make, the support they receive, the usefulness of homework, preparation for transfer to the next school and the range of activities, trips and visits provided.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Many key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaires. All agreed that they felt safe in school; they knew what to do if upset and how to keep healthy. All felt that they were doing well at school and had good help from teachers and their assistants. They knew what to do if they had difficulties and how to get help if they found their work too hard. They thought that homework was useful. All were happy with the amount of classroom resources and equipment.

Very few pupils had negative views of their school. These related to the way in which the school dealt with bullying, gave opportunities for taking regular exercise and the behaviour of some other children in class and at play and lunch times.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

P Mathias	Reporting Inspector
A Evans	Team Inspector
H Adams	Lay Inspector
I Hind	Peer Inspector
A James	School Nominee

Contractor:

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Copies of the report

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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