



*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**

**Somerton Primary School  
Hawthorne Fosse  
Newport  
Gwent  
NP9 9AB**

**Date of inspection: October 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:

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

Somerton Primary School is a community school situated on the eastern side of the city of Newport in a designated Community First area. The school serves an urban catchment area where 78% of households live in rented accommodation. The area is recognised as having high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

There are 137 pupils aged three to eleven years in the school. Pupils are organised into five mixed-aged classes and one additional class of 28 part-time nursery aged pupils.

Approximately 59% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the local authority and all-Wales average. Approximately 34% of pupils have additional learning needs, including seven pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 16% of pupils as coming from ethnic backgrounds. Many of these pupils come from homes where English is not the predominate language. No pupils are identified as Welsh speaking. There are two looked-after children in the school.

The school has achieved a few external awards, including Phase 3 of the Healthy Schools Award and the silver ECO school.

Since the last inspection in 2005, the senior leadership of the school has changed. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2006 and an assistant headteacher replaced the deputy headteacher in September 2010.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Somerton Primary School is £4,376, which compares with a maximum of £6,996 and a minimum of £2,612 for primary schools in Newport. The school has the fifth highest budget per pupil out of the 48 primary schools in Newport.

## Summary

|                                               |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The school's current performance</b>       | <b>Good</b>     |
| <b>The school's prospects for improvement</b> | <b>Adequate</b> |

### Current performance

Somerton is a good school because:

- many pupils achieve good standards and make good or better progress in their basic skills than expected;
- most pupils have a positive attitude to their work and feel safe and secure;
- teaching is mainly good;
- teaching assistants provide high levels of support for pupils, particularly pupils with additional learning needs;
- behaviour is managed well; and
- effective care, support and guidance procedures contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has gone through a period of instability over the last three years. The headteacher has been absent for long periods, returning to school full-time in February 2011. The school has a new assistant headteacher and senior management team and posts of additional responsibility within the school have been re-organised. Classes have also been re-structured to manage issues of falling roles, with a few teaching and non-teaching staff changing year groups.

The school is predicting a deficit budget for 2012-2013, which may result in the need for further re-structuring within the school.

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate.

The strengths are that:

- the headteacher, senior leadership team, staff and governors are strongly committed to raising standards;
- the school has responded positively to advice and support from the local authority to implement changes in practice, particularly in the Foundation Phase;
- governors are well informed about performance data and take their role seriously; and
- recent initiatives in reading have resulted in improving many pupils' standards.

The areas for development are that:

- not all aspects of the life and work of school are consistently monitored and reviewed which means that the school's knowledge of all areas of provision and performance are insecure;

- self-evaluation is not used well enough to be an effective tool for school improvement and takes insufficient account of the views of all stakeholders; and
- the school has made slower than expected progress in addressing issues from the last inspection.

## Recommendations

Somerton Primary School needs to:

- R1 improve pupils' standards in numeracy in key stage 2 and in information and communication technology and Welsh throughout the school;
- R2 review curriculum planning to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils;
- R3 ensure that there is a systematic and clear plan for reviewing all aspects of the school's work over time;
- R4 use self-evaluation more effectively to identify whole-school priorities and make better use of staff expertise to inform this process; and
- R5 address the health and safety issue identified during the inspection and make sure that all relevant pupils attend daily collective worship.

### **What happens next?**

Somerton Primary School will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by Estyn.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Over time, most pupils make sound or better progress as they move through the school, often from a low entry point. Gains made by seven-year-olds are built on in lower key stage 2, with good progress made by many pupils by 11 years of age.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively in lessons. Most pupils speak clearly using a range of vocabulary appropriate to their age and ability. Many pupils communicate their ideas and opinions confidently. Most pupils are able to recall information from previous tasks correctly and apply this knowledge and understanding appropriately in new situations.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils' early reading skills develop steadily and, by the end of the phase, many abler pupils read with a good degree of accuracy and understanding. These pupils also write short pieces independently, with reasonably neat handwriting and spelling

In key stage 2, many older and more able pupils read with fluency and expression and show good understanding of what they have read. These pupils write confidently using different styles and genres. For instance, pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class make notes about the 'pros and cons' of Hansel and Gretel being left in the forest, while in the Year 5 and 6 class pupils write interesting and imaginative questions for Houdini.

Generally, most pupils apply their literacy skills well across the curriculum. For instance, at the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils produce attractive posters about the danger of fire after a visit from the Fire Service. Pupils in key stage 2 use their research skills to find out about planets and what makes a good newspaper headline.

Pupils' numeracy skills in key stage 2 are acceptable as are pupils' information and communication skills across the school. Many pupils use their skills suitably in limited contexts.

Most pupils are confident in using and responding to basic greetings in Welsh. In collective worship, pupils say a Welsh prayer confidently and sing a Welsh hymn with understanding and enjoyment. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Phase count by rote to ten. In the Year 3 and 4 class, most pupils respond well to instructions and commands and show enthusiasm for what they do. However, there is little progression in pupils' oracy skills as they move through the school. Throughout the school, pupils' reading and writing skills in Welsh are underdeveloped.

Pupils' thinking skills are developing appropriately with even the youngest pupils identifying what they know and what they want to find out about topics.

Pupils with additional learning needs and pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress during their time at the school. Pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieve less well on average than other pupils, although they do better than similar pupils in other schools.

Generally, seven and 11-year-old pupils achieve well compared to pupils in similar schools in the family, but on average not as well as those in similar schools nationally in English in key stage 1 and in science in key stage 2. With the exception of 2010-2011, boys have generally outperformed girls in English and science at seven years of age with girls outperforming boys in mathematics. Girls at seven years of age, however, have performed considerably less well than boys at the higher level (level 3) in English. The relative performance of boys and girls in the school at 11 years of age is similar in mathematics and science. Girls generally do better than boys in English at 11.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

All pupils feel safe and happy in school and are confident to approach an adult if they have any concerns. Pupils are very proud of their school.

Attitudes to learning are good and most pupils are well motivated and work conscientiously. Behaviour is consistently good in classes and around the school. Pupils work and play successfully together in classes, demonstrating very good manners.

Pupils' decision-making skills are developing appropriately. Members of the school council, for instance, were instrumental in arranging the painting of the school lunch hall. The school 'Ambassadors' facilitated new play equipment in the Foundation Phase playground. Pupils agree class rules and make choices about what they want to learn. However, pupils are not yet fully involved in making decisions about school life, such as having a formal role in self-evaluation. Many pupils are regularly involved in community activities. These include performing at concerts and painting murals on the fence area of the 'Hope' Centre.

Pupils are well prepared for life and work outside school. Many older pupils act responsibly, manage their time effectively and know what they need to do to improve. Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise in the development of a healthy lifestyle.

Attendance has improved significantly over the last two years and is line with that for similar schools. While nearly all pupils arrive on time, a few are regularly late.

|                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------|

|             |
|-------------|
| <b>Good</b> |
|-------------|

### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

Learning experiences are generally stimulating and interesting and successfully meet the needs of many pupils in English, mathematics and science (core subjects). However, the organisation and planning for the whole curriculum, particularly in key stage 2, is not well balanced. As a result, there is a lack of breadth and depth in pupils' experiences in subjects other than the core subjects.



Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with additional learning needs through a variety of basic skills intervention programmes. These pupils, however, often miss important aspects of class work when they are withdrawn for support.

Provision for pupils' communication skills is well planned and delivered, although work is not always sufficiently challenging for the most able. In the Foundation Phase, good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their numeracy skills. The school is less successful in its provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills in key stage 2 and pupils' information and communication and Welsh skills throughout the school. The promotion of the understanding of the cultural and historical characteristics of Wales is satisfactory.

Staff make effective use of visits, special events and visitors to enrich pupils' learning. The school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities and good use is made of the outdoor area to support learning in the Foundation Phase.

The eco committee encourages pupils to act in a responsible way. Pupils' understanding of global citizenship is developing acceptably through relevant topic work.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teaching is mainly good. Most teachers motivate pupils well to succeed and make progress. The very good relationships between adults and pupils and the highly effective support that pupils receive contribute positively to pupils' progress in basic skills and their wellbeing. Teaching assistants and volunteers are deployed well in almost all classes and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Teachers generally use an appropriate range of teaching approaches and resources to engage pupils' interests. In the Year 3 and 4 class, for instance, pupils' spelling is effectively reinforced through dance and movement. Role-play, in both the Foundation and junior classes, positively encourages pupils' speaking and listening skills.

In most lessons, teachers' explanations are clear, sessions proceed at a suitable pace and pupils clearly enjoy learning. However, teachers' questioning and planned activities do not always provide enough challenge for all pupils.

Regular marking of pupils' work celebrates their success in learning, but 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 self-assessment and peer assessment are underdeveloped.

Parents are well informed about their children's achievements through annual reports and regular meetings.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The care, support and guidance offered to pupils is very effective and contributes positively to pupils' enjoyment of school, their high levels of wellbeing and willingness to learn.

The school's personal and social education provision successfully promotes pupils' personal development. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to manage their feelings and how to treat others fairly and with respect.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Teachers diagnose difficulties at an early stage. An appropriate range of intervention and support approaches are successful in helping these pupils make generally good progress.

Effective arrangements 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 has appropriate policies and arrangements for promoting healthy living and pupils' wellbeing. Pupils learn how to keep safe and there are clear strategies to encourage good behaviour. Any bullying is taken seriously and immediately dealt with. Consequently, pupils report that they feel safe in school.

The school is generally successful in promoting pupil's spiritual, moral social and cultural development. However, pupils who receive additional support do not always attend daily collective worship.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding. A health and safety issue was brought to the attention of the school during the inspection.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a caring, welcoming and orderly environment where every child is valued. The school is fully inclusive and treats all pupils equally. All have the opportunity to access the full range of the school's provision.

Good use is beginning to be made of the school grounds to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils make regular visits into the community as part of topic work and the Foundation Phase quad is used well to develop pupils' physical skills and increase their understanding of how plants grow.

The quality of accommodation is acceptable and the school buildings are in a reasonable state of repair. The recent decoration of the toilets has improved their general condition but they are still a poor quality facility for the pupils. There is enough room in the classrooms for the number of pupils currently on role. However, access to classrooms and the computer suite is often through the top junior class, which causes disruption for these pupils.

Displays are attractive throughout the school and celebrate pupils' achievements and progress. Attractive role-play areas, such as in the Year 4 and 5 class, contribute well to pupils' learning experiences. The playgrounds are big enough for the number of pupils and are generally well resourced. However, the resources are not always used well enough during playtime to engage the interests of all pupils.

Resources for learning are generally of good quality and are well-matched to pupils' learning needs.

|                                                                |                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b> | <b>Adequate</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|

### **Leadership: Adequate**

Over the last few years, the school's leadership has experienced episodes of instability. As a result, there has been a general lack of direction in making and sustaining improvement in all areas of the life and work of the school.

The new senior management team has been in place since September. It has a good understanding of day-to-day issues and pupil performance at the end of the key stages. However, senior managers are less well informed about other aspects of the school's work. This means that they do not always carry out their roles effectively enough to ensure greater consistency in pupils' learning experiences and curriculum provision.

Subject leaders generally make detailed and accurate assessments of their subjects. However, these assessments are not used to inform whole school priorities and planning. Too little regard is also paid to the expertise and knowledge of all staff and their contribution to school improvement is undervalued.

Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school and well informed about pupils' results and the issues they raise. However, governors are not fully involved in the school's self-evaluation process and do not have enough knowledge of all aspects of the school's provision to act as a 'critical friend'.

The school shows clear commitment in addressing national and local priorities such as tackling disadvantage, and implementing the Foundation Phase and Physical Education in School Sport (PESS). The school has not yet fully embraced the School Effectiveness Framework as a driver for school improvement.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school uses a reasonable range of activities to evaluate how well it is doing and what it needs to do to improve.

Data is analysed well and used effectively to identify pupils who require additional support in literacy and numeracy and to identify where improvements can be made in pupils' basic skills. For example, a recent focus on guided reading is impacting positively upon many pupils' confidence in discussing what they have read. The headteacher, assistant headteacher and teachers with additional responsibilities undertake lesson observations. Subject leaders' review pupils' work and good attention has been paid to local authority reviews. However, the planning for self-evaluation is not coherent or properly managed. Information gathered is not always used to good effect and not all aspects of the school's work are rigorously scrutinised. This means that the school's knowledge about all areas of provision and performance is not always secure.

The school has yet to seek the views of all stakeholders in the self-evaluation process.

The school is developing as a reflective community. For instance, Foundation Phase teachers attend a local authority professional learning community, which has led to improvement in the quality of the learning experiences for the younger pupils.

Progress in meeting all recommendations from the previous inspection is adequate.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has developed effective partnerships with a range of partners. Community links are strong and the school makes good use of local people and voluntary sector groups to support and enrich the curriculum. Community First funding is used well to support a part-time nurture class, which has impacted positively upon pupils' behaviour and wellbeing. Partnership with the local 'Hope' community centre provides appropriate support for families.

There are good links with the Welsh-medium playgroup based on the school site and with the high school, both of which benefit pupils when moving from one stage of education to another. There are effective links also with local colleges and universities providing opportunities for teacher training and high school student placements.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. A few parent volunteers are used well to provide support in classes and in delivering a road safety project in the Foundation Phase. Many parents also regularly attend concerts and meetings about their child's progress held at the school. However, most parents are not actively involved in school life.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school budget is managed efficiently and, overall, the school uses its resources appropriately. This includes employing additional staff, which is having a good impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and arrangements for this are well organised. All staff are part of performance management and generally have the knowledge and expertise to cover all aspects of the curriculum.

The school accommodation is well ordered and managed. Although the buildings are beginning to show signs of 'wear and tear', they are generally well maintained and staff provide an attractive environment for pupils' learning.

In view of the good outcomes achieved by most pupils, the standards of pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching, care, support and guidance, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Trend data over time shows that pupils' performance in the core subject indicator (CSI), the expected level in English, mathematics and science for seven and eleven year olds, generally compares favourably with performance in similar schools within its family and nationally, although there have been significant dips in performance in individual years.

Compared to similar schools nationally the school does less well in English in key stage 1 at the expected level (level 2) and at the higher level (level 3). In key stage 2, science is the weakest performing subject over time in comparison to performance levels in similar schools nationally at the expected level (level 4) and at the higher level (level 5).

In key stage 1, pupils' performance at the expected level and above is generally better than the average for similar schools in its family in mathematics and science. Pupils also do well at the expected level in English compared to pupils in similar schools in the family, but girls in particular perform less well in English at the higher level. In two of the last three years, boys' performance in English has exceeded that of boys in the family at the higher level but no boy has achieved success in writing at the higher level. No seven-year-old girl has attained the higher level in English for the last four years.

At seven years of age, with the exception of 2010-2011, boys have generally performed better than girls at the expected level and above in English and science. Overtime, however, girls have outperformed boys in mathematics at the expected level and at the higher level. Compared to performance levels in similar schools, the picture is mixed, but boys generally do particularly well in science compared to pupils in similar schools.

In key stage 2, pupils' performance at the expected level and above is generally better than the average for similar schools in its family in English, mathematics and science. There are no clear trends in performance in pupils' oracy, reading or writing skills over time but generally the school compares well with other schools in its family. Pupils' results in 2010-2011 in English were the best in its family and compared favourably with local and national averages.

At eleven years of age, the performance of boys and girls at the expected level and above is similar in mathematics and science. Boys' performance over time also compares favourably with that of boys in the family in these two subjects. Generally, boys do less well than girls in English at the expected level and above but compare well with boys in other schools in its family. In 2010-2011, two girls attained well above the expected level in English, attaining level 6.

Generally, pupils that are eligible for free school meals perform less well than other pupils in the school, particularly in key stage 2. However, pupils in the school eligible for free schools meals perform better on average than pupils in other schools in the family.

Pupils with additional learning needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in meeting their targets as they move through the school.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Learner questionnaires

Sixty pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaires. Inspectors also talked to individual pupils and representative groups of pupils across the school.

Most pupils state that they are doing well in school and nearly all believe that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress.

Most pupils feel that the school deals well with bullying. They know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset and know what to do if they find their work hard. Nearly all pupils consider that they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard. As a result, all pupils state that they feel safe.

All pupils feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and most state that they have lots of opportunities to get regular exercise. Most pupils also feel that they have enough books and equipment and that homework helps them to improve their work.

Many pupils feel that children behave well during lessons.

Overall, these views are in line with the views of pupils in other schools across Wales. However, a higher proportion of pupils in Somerton are less positive about pupils' behaviour at play time and lunchtimes than pupils in other schools across Wales.

#### Parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses (fewer than 10) received before the deadline for the collection. Three parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the inspection team.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Bev Jenkins                 | Reporting Inspector |
| Eleri Hurley                | Team Inspector      |
| Edward Tipper               | Lay Inspector       |
| Angela Davies               | Peer Inspector      |
| Sharon Harvey (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](http://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' (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 |