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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Trerobart Primary School
Crawshay Street
Ynysbwl
Pontypridd
CF37 3EF

Date of inspection: March 2011

by

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



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE** | Gold

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

Trerobart Primary School is situated in the former mining village of Ynysybwl near Pontypridd, in the county borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The school serves the close-knit community of Ynysybwl and the surrounding rural area.

There are 236 full-time pupils on roll including 22 children in the nursery. The school is organised into nine classes that include three mixed-age classes. The school states that the local area has a high rate of unemployment and that about a third of families are economically disadvantaged.

English is the predominant language of almost all pupils. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language at home. Fewer than 2% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Approximately 29% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is considerably higher than the all-Wales average of just under 20%.

The school has identified 23% of pupils with additional learning needs. No pupils have a statement of special educational need. One pupil was excluded during the twelve months prior to the inspection.

A few pupils join Trerobart Primary School at age seven from the village infant school. At age 11 years, almost all pupils transfer to the local comprehensive school in Pontypridd.

The school has achieved the Third Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Bronze Green Flag eco-schools award.

The school was last inspected in 2005. The current headteacher joined the school in 2007 and the deputy headteacher in 2009. Since the last inspection, the Victorian premises have undergone a major programme of refurbishment.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Trerobart Primary School is £2,896, which compares with a maximum of £9,064 and a minimum of £2,553 for primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The school has the 97th 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	Excellent

Current performance

Trerobart Primary School is a good school because:

- leaders and managers have high expectations and ensure that the school functions effectively;
- pupils' standards have shown good and steady improvement in recent years;
- pupils are proud of their school, behave well, are keen to learn and know that their work is valued;
- teaching is good across the school, and staff work well as a team and create a positive environment for learning;
- work is planned very carefully to meet the needs of pupils so as to ensure that they develop key skills; and
- there is a strong commitment to continuous school improvement.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement in Trerobart Primary School are excellent because:

- the headteacher provides clear leadership and has created a culture of effective shared responsibility;
- there have been significant improvements across most aspects of school life since the last inspection in 2005;
- staff have high expectations that impact positively on the standards pupils achieve;
- the careful planning, management and monitoring of key skills work are outstanding;
- the organisation and regular review of school documents are exemplary; and
- self-evaluation is well embedded and enables the school to identify clear and appropriate areas for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the school needs to:

- R1 continue to build on the good progress made in raising standards in English throughout the school;
- R2 improve attendance by continuing to give a strong focus to the strategies introduced;
- R3 ensure that teachers' marking is more consistent and gives pupils better information about how to improve their work; and
- R4 improve the resources for outdoor learning in the Foundation Phase so as to give more opportunity to develop the curriculum.

What happens next?

Trerobart Primary School will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

The school will also be invited to prepare written case studies describing the context and background of the best practice underpinning the excellent judgements given to the learning experiences and leadership.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Throughout the school, most pupils listen well, are co-operative and engage well in learning. On entry to the school, many pupils have limited vocabulary and lack confidence in speaking to the class. By the end of key stage 2, almost all pupils develop their vocabulary and speaking ability, and make good progress in reading and writing. School data from 2010-2011 shows a 9% increase in the number of pupils reading above their chronological ages. Many pupils read competently and use their skills effectively to carry out research. Most pupils develop good writing skills and present their work extremely well. Most pupils have well-developed skills in numeracy and using information and communication technology that they apply well in a range of subjects.

Overall, pupils' performance in Standard Attainment Assessments showed significant improvement in 2009-2010.

In key stage 1, pupils' performance in the core subject indicator, the expected level in English, mathematics and science, has improved over the last three years. In 2010, 80% of pupils attained the expected level although performance was just below the average for Wales and for similar schools. Pupils made a significant improvement in English in 2009-2010 and about one fifth gained the higher level 3. In science, every pupil in key stage 1 attained the expected level and pupils' performance was better than local and national averages.

In key stage 2, the performance of pupils in the core subject indicator has varied over the last four years. There was a significant improvement in 2010, particularly in English. Pupils made a good improvement in reading but performed less well in writing. In mathematics, pupils in key stage 2 have performed consistently well over the last four years.

When compared with schools with a similar percentage of pupils taking free school meals, the school is in at least the second quartile in both key stages for the core subjects.

There is no significant pattern to the performance of boys and girls. Pupils receiving free school meals and those with additional learning needs generally make good progress.

Most pupils make good progress in learning Welsh language. Younger pupils use Welsh phrases with increasing confidence. Many older pupils can hold a simple conversation in Welsh.

Wellbeing: Good

Almost all pupils behave very well in class and around the school, and are keen to learn. They show great pride in their school and are welcoming to visitors. They feel safe in school and are confident in knowing whom to ask for help when needed. Playground 'buddies' provide appropriate support at break times.

Pupils understand that they need to take exercise and eat healthy food.

Most pupils develop very good independent learning skills from a young age. These pupils are confident in the school's routines and quickly settle to worthwhile tasks with little adult intervention.

The school has an attendance rate of 89%, which is below that of similar schools but is showing a significant improvement so far this year. This reflects the success of various strategies to encourage good attendance. Nearly all pupils arrive promptly in the mornings.

Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to decisions about the development of the school through their representatives on the school council and eco committee. They understand the need to consider people less fortunate than themselves and, for example, have raised funds for their link school in Uganda and for Haiti earthquake victims.

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

The school provides a wide range of stimulating opportunities for all pupils. Teachers plan very well in teams to share expertise and good practice. Throughout the school, topic work is interesting and engages almost all pupils. The quality and range of topic work produced is outstanding. High expectations are embedded in all aspects of learning. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs that are well attended. Additional music lessons further enhance learning opportunities.

Provision for skills is an excellent and sector leading feature of the school. There is careful, effective and high-quality planning and monitoring to ensure that opportunities to develop pupils' key skills are woven through the curriculum.

Provision for the Welsh language is good. Teachers set a good example to pupils and speak in Welsh with confidence and accuracy. All adults provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality and the art, music and culture of Wales.

The pupils demonstrate sound understanding of the wider world. Their links with a school in Uganda are well established. They have good understanding of global issues such as deforestation in Brazil. Through the eco-council, pupils are involved in initiatives to ensure that the school acts sustainably, for example by checking recycling.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers and support staff have a good understanding of the curriculum and have high expectations of all pupils. The Foundation Phase is well organised and staff work as a team to plan and deliver stimulating and challenging activities for all pupils. In key stage 2, teachers plan well in teams and use a good range of activities, resources and approaches to inspire and challenge most pupils.

'Assessment for learning' strategies are used effectively throughout the school. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they will be learning and provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss how well they are doing. From a young age pupils are able to peer-assess and self-assess effectively. By key stage 2 this ability to reflect on their own learning is a particular strength.

Pupils' progress is regularly assessed at individual and group level. There is a detailed and thorough tracking system to monitor the progress made by every child from baseline to Year 6.

The school has well-developed systems to ensure accurate moderation of pupils' levels of attainment at the end of each key stage. Work is moderated with other schools and work samples are reviewed regularly to ensure a consistent approach.

Although pupils' work is generally marked, the quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always provide pupils with enough information about how they can improve.

Reports to parents are clear and informative. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school offers a good range of initiatives to support pupils' wellbeing and encourage healthy living. There are appropriate policies to promote good behaviour and discourage bullying. Almost all pupils feel well supported. Almost all pupils and their parents or carers feel able to approach staff for support when required. The school has introduced rigorous procedures to raise levels of attendance that are beginning to make an impact.

The school has effective systems to monitor pupils' wellbeing. These include a wellbeing survey that was carefully analysed and provided useful information of areas where the school subsequently made changes or improvements, for example by providing equipment for outdoor playtimes.

Learning experiences promote pupils' personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Older pupils demonstrate good understanding of the beliefs and lives of others, and show empathy in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

There is an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very good. Their progress is monitored thoroughly and support material is tailored carefully to meet individual needs. There are very good links with specialist external agencies. The school uses appropriate, child-friendly individual education plans that are evaluated twice a year. Pupils understand their targets and, overall, have success in meeting them.

Learning environment: Good

There is a strong ethos within the school that promotes a sense of belonging, respect and equality. The school encourages all pupils to be fully involved in school life. Differences are valued and celebrated. Pupils enjoy good opportunities for taking responsibility.

The school is a fully inclusive community with each pupil treated as an individual whose needs are clearly identified and addressed. Equality of opportunity is embodied in the school ethos and nearly all pupils report that oppressive behaviour is addressed promptly and effectively.

The school has a good range of high quality resources that are used very well. The indoor accommodation has been developed in a creative, imaginative way, particularly for the Foundation Phase. Improving resource provision for outdoor learning, to extend pupils' learning opportunities, is an area the school recognises in its development plan.

The accommodation meets the needs of all pupils well and the high standard of classroom displays helps create an enriched learning environment. Nearly all pupils are appreciative of the quality and sufficiency of learning resources such as books, equipment and computers.

Overall, the school is in a good condition apart from the toilets, which are satisfactory in key stage 2 and unsuitable in the Foundation Phase building.

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

Leaders and managers have established a clear vision for the school that is shared by all. The headteacher knows the school well; he consults regularly with staff and has a high profile around the school. There is a well-developed and effective culture of distributed leadership where staff take responsibility readily. Sharing good practice and having high expectations are the norm. The outcome is the very positive impact this has on standards pupils achieve. These aspects of leadership and management are sector leading practice.

This exceptionally effective management structure has resulted in a school ethos that is purposeful, caring and dynamic. There is a very strong team ethic among staff and volunteers. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Subject leaders work very well across the school to support and challenge colleagues as 'critical friends'. New strategies are delivered and monitored with rigour, for example changes to the policy for teaching reading that are having a significant impact.

The governing body is pro-active in the life of the school and monitors the school's work well. Governors have designated links with key stages and visit classrooms regularly. They worked very effectively in partnership with the local authority during the recent refurbishment programme.

The school takes good account of local and national priorities in planning its work.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation process is well embedded in the life of the school. Staff, governors, pupils and parents are all involved in the process and provide a wide range of useful information. Leaders and managers know the school very well and identify appropriate areas for improvement in the school development plan.

School leaders make very thorough and detailed analyses of data and have very good understanding of how well pupils are doing. They use the information effectively to identify areas for improvement. Monitoring pupils' work is part of regular practice amongst the staff team and impacts directly on topic and lesson planning.

There are effective systems to monitor staff performance that include regular lesson observations by senior managers and peers. Subject leaders are released on a regular basis to work in class with colleagues in order to monitor standards. Staff have useful opportunities to observe good practice within the school and with other schools in the local cluster. Staff have good external opportunities for professional development.

Pupils are encouraged to give their views through surveys. Their opinions are listened to carefully and taken account of well.

Parent representatives from each class make a useful contribution to school evaluation. They meet with the deputy headteacher each half-term to discuss aspects of the school, for example to review a school policy, and all parents receive notes of the discussions at the meetings.

The school has made very good progress in addressing the recommendations of the last inspection.

Partnership working: Good

The school has strong links with a wide range of partners.

In particular, volunteers from the local community provide important and valuable support to the school. They help to ensure the success of school events and activities, and a few work conscientiously with pupils on a daily basis to support pupils' learning.

Parents feel very welcome in the school and find the staff approachable. The parent-teacher association provides good support, particularly through fund-raising activities.

The school makes good use of the local library and theatre. It holds community services in local churches and chapels at special times of the year.

There are good links with Glanffrwd Infants School, the local feeder, and Pontypridd High School. There are effective transition arrangements with both schools that ensure pupils settle well. Link activities for older pupils have included a drama project with Year 7.

The school is part of the Community Focussed Schools initiative and the headteacher works closely with other agencies, including the police and health service, to identify children who may be at risk and to promote their wellbeing.

Liaison with the link school in Uganda provides good opportunities for pupils to learn more about the wider world.

The school provides good quality placements for learners from schools and colleges, including those studying initial teacher training.

Resource management: Good

Over the last four years, the accommodation has been remodelled to provide a much improved learning environment. The school has a good range of resources that are well matched to the interests and learning needs of pupils. Staff have appropriate experience and are well deployed. They make very good use of time given for planning, preparation and assessment.

There are well-developed procedures to ensure that resources are effectively allocated to meet identified priorities. Financial management is effective and efficient. The school has a clear vision of how the environment should be further improved and how this fits with the primary aim of raising standards.

In view of the sound financial management and well-planned programme for improvement that leads to higher standards of pupils' achievement, the school provides very good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Forty-five parents completed questionnaires and, overall, most are satisfied or very satisfied with the school and feel that it is well run. Nearly all of them agree that their child likes school, feels safe there and was helped to settle in at the start. Most parents feel that their children make good progress, that teaching is good and that staff expect the children to work hard. Most agree that the school encourages children to take on responsibility, be healthy and take regular exercise. Most parents agree that pupils behave well in school although only a few strongly agree. A few parents do not feel that the school keeps them well enough informed about their child's progress, that there is a good enough range of activities or that homework builds well on what their child has learned in school.

About a quarter of parents who responded do not know if the school prepares their children well for the next stage of education.

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred pupils in key stage 2 responded to the questionnaire and, overall, are very positive about their school. They all agree that they feel safe, know what to do and whom to ask if their work is hard, and have enough resources to support their learning. Almost all pupils agree that they are doing well, know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset, and agree that the school teaches them to be healthy and that homework helps them understand their work.

About a quarter of pupils who responded do not agree that children behave well so that they can get their work done, although almost all agree that everyone behaves well at playtime. Girls' responses are a little more positive about this than boys'. Almost all pupils agree that the school deals well with any bullying.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Rosemary Lait	Reporting Inspector
Mike Munting	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Kate Olsen	Peer Inspector
Robert Devereux	School Nominee

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