



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

**Cynffig Comprehensive School
East Avenue
Kenfig Hill
Bridgend
CF33 6NP**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

Mr Peter Harris

for

**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

Cynffig Comprehensive School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school in the county of Bridgend. There are 723 pupils on roll, compared with 686 at the time of the previous inspection in 2006. There are currently 110 students in the sixth form compared to 101 in 2006. Most pupils come from five local primary schools. Nearly all pupils come from English speaking homes.

The school's intake is from a varied social background and represents the full range of ability. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 31.5%, which is well above the national average of 17.1% for secondary schools.

Academic ability on entry is below national averages. The school has 11% of pupils on the special educational needs register, compared with the national average of 19.6% for secondary schools. In 2010, the school opened The Learning House, a facility to support pupils at risk of exclusion or who need additional emotional support.

The current headteacher was appointed in 2008 and the deputy headteacher in 2010. Apart from one assistant headteacher the other members of the senior management team took up their posts before this time.

The individual school budget per pupil for Cynffig Comprehensive School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4665 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the secondary schools in Bridgend is £4705 and the minimum is £3785. Cynffig Comprehensive School is 2nd out of the 11 secondary schools in Bridgend in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Insert text

Main evaluation

Cynffig Comprehensive School is excellent because of the:

- overall standards of pupils' achievement and wellbeing;
- quality of teaching;
- sector leading support for developing pupils' literacy skills;
- care, support and guidance provided; and impact of leadership at all levels.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are excellent because of the:

- inspirational leadership of the headteacher;
- teamwork of senior and middle leaders;
- ways in which the school has high expectations of its pupils;
- embedding of strategies to develop pupils' skills and capacity to learn; and
- successful track record of improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Continue to improve standards.
- R2 Continue to improve levels of attendance.
- R3 Extend opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh language skills outside of Welsh lessons.

These recommendations feature in current development plans.

What happens next?

The staff and governors of Cynffig Comprehensive School will prepare an action plan to show how it will address these recommendations.

The school will be invited to prepare a written case study describing the sector leading features identified in this report.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

Overall, pupils make exceptional progress.

Standards in key stage 3 are good.

In key stage 3 in 2011, the core subject indicator was well above the average of similar schools on the free-school-meal benchmark. At both level 5 and level 6, performance is above average in many indicators of performance.

The school's performance in the non-core subjects at key stage 3 is also good. It is above average in the majority of subjects when compared to similar schools.

At key stage 4, pupils' performance is outstanding.

The school has performed significantly above average in most of the main indicators of performance, including the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics and the core subject indicator for the past three years.

In the sixth form standards are good. Performance at the level three threshold is broadly in line with Welsh averages and represents a good level of achievement for these pupils.

At both key stage 3 and key stage 4, girls outperform boys.

The difference in performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not has decreased over the period since the school was last inspected.

More able pupils, as well as those with additional learning needs, make excellent progress.

In 2011, the proportion of pupils who remained in full-time education at the end of key stage 4 was above the average for the local authority and for Wales. The proportion of pupils who left school in 2011 and who did not remain in education or enter training or employment was much better than the local average. In 2011 only one percent of pupils left school without a qualification.

Progress made by pupils in each key stage in acquiring skills and knowledge needed to move on to the next stage of learning is well above expectation. In many lessons observed, nearly all pupils achieved good standards, and in around one third of these lessons they achieved excellent standards. Pupils with additional learning needs make very good progress in their lessons.

Pupils of all ages and abilities make very good progress in developing reading and writing skills. Many pupils speak confidently. The majority of pupils express

themselves clearly and thoughtfully using a wide general and subject-specific vocabulary.

Many pupils write to a high standard. Their work is accomplished and many pupils write well at length in a variety of styles. Pupils produce imaginative and evaluative pieces, making well-considered and extended responses.

Most pupils demonstrate very good listening skills. They respond very well to questions raised by their teachers and listen actively to the contributions made by other pupils in class.

Pupils make excellent progress in developing the skills they need to learn successfully. Pupils work very well together in pairs and in groups to explore ideas and to develop their understanding. Many develop their problem solving skills very well. In particular, many are able to use their literacy skills confidently across the curriculum.

Most pupils reflect very well on their learning. They assess their own work accurately and with care. Particularly effective support in developing the skills of self-assessment helps pupils to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Many pupils know how to improve their work. Pupils respond very well to their teachers' high expectations and set themselves challenging goals.

In key stage 3, pupils' make good progress in Welsh second language. Over the past three years their performance has been above average when compared to similar schools. In key stage 4 many pupils gain a qualification in the full GCSE course.

Many pupils respond positively to the encouragement to use incidental Welsh.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Most pupils display excellent levels of behaviour in class and very positive attitudes to learning. They show levels of concentration, engagement and motivation to a very high standard. This has a positive impact on their standards of achievement.

Nearly all pupils report that they feel very safe in school. They feel that the school deals well with the rare incidents of bullying. Pupils benefit from the effective provision to boost learners' personal and social development.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living and understand how to improve and maintain their health. Participation levels in physical activities such as the 5X60 programme are high.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good around the school. They are courteous, tolerant and respect each other and visitors. Overall, attendance levels are good and compare well to similar schools.

Pupils have a worthwhile say in decision-making and contribute their views about what and how they learn. The school council is particularly effective and has had a beneficial impact on school life in a number of areas such as the design of outside facilities.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Excellent

Learning experiences: Excellent

The school provides all pupils, including those who have moderate learning difficulties, with an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum. It meets all statutory requirements, including learning pathways 14-19.

At key stage 3 the curriculum builds systematically on the work of the partner primary schools. The school has sector leading arrangements for developing pupils' learning skills. In particular there is outstanding support to help teachers develop pupils' literacy. This makes a significant contribution to improving pupil progress across all their subjects. There are also excellent arrangements for developing pupils' personal and social skills. These help them develop into more competent and confident learners, better able to gain from the curriculum on offer. Furthermore they obtain an accredited qualification in personal and social education at the end of key stage 3.

At key stage 4 the school meets the needs of learners very well. It provides a good range of vocational and academic courses. This allows pupils to build on their experiences at key stage 3 and to follow their individual learning pathways. The Welsh baccalaureate qualification considerably broadens and enriches the range of experiences on offer. In the sixth form successful consortium working allows the school to offer students a very wide range of pathways.

Arrangements for developing the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension of the curriculum are good. The school contributes well to learners' wider knowledge and understanding of Wales. It helps develop learners' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship through work in several subjects and as part of its personal and social education programme.

Teaching: Excellent

Most teaching is good and a high proportion is excellent.

Teachers plan lessons that have a clear purpose, good pace, and a range of interesting and varied learning activities well matched to pupils' needs. Most lessons enable pupils to make very good progress in their skills. Teachers make excellent use of their professional learning.

Working relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding. Staff monitor progress carefully and provide very good individual support, guidance and intervention. The high expectations of both effort and achievement make a significant contribution to the very positive learning environment within the school.

In the very few lessons where teaching is less successful, there is a lack of challenge and teaching fails to maintain motivation and engagement.

Marking is good in almost all cases, and some is outstanding. The ways in which teachers assess pupils' work and help pupils improve are excellent. In most lessons teachers use very effective approaches to help pupils understand their progress and construct improvement targets.

The use of assessment information to monitor and record pupil progress is excellent. It identifies underachievement quickly and effectively. The follow-up arrangements are excellent. High quality review meetings ensure pupils have an accurate picture of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. The impact of these arrangements on pupils' learning and achievement is outstanding.

Parents are regularly updated on their children's progress. They receive very good interim and end of year reports.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school develops pupils' health and wellbeing successfully; this has a clear and significant impact on behaviour and attendance. The school provides valued support for all learners. There is exceptional provision for the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is reinforced through an extensive personal and social education programme.

The school makes outstanding use of external support agencies to provide effective assistance for vulnerable pupils. Specific learning programmes have a beneficial impact on pupils' self-confidence. Pupils receive excellent guidance on subject and career choices.

The ways in which the Learning House provides personalised support for identified pupils are very effective. Initiatives to promote the social inclusion of all learners are significant strengths of the school.

Pupils with additional learning needs receive excellent support. Individual education plans identify suitable learning targets and they are reviewed regularly. This has resulted in consistently good improvement in attitudes, behaviour and achievement.

There is adequate provision to meet the needs of more able and talented pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding pupils.

Learning environment: Excellent

Meeting pupils' needs and overcoming their barriers to learning and participation is fundamental to its ethos. This enables pupils to perform well above expectations.

The school's outstanding success in promoting equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race or disability is evident in all aspects of its work. This is appreciated by pupils and parents. Effective policies and programmes successfully develop mutual respect, active citizenship and positive attitudes to diversity.

The accommodation is of good quality. The standard of cleaning and maintenance is excellent. High standards of display in classrooms contribute to a positive learning environment.

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

Leadership: Excellent

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide excellent vision and leadership for the school. They have created a 'can do' culture which permeates the organisation, impacting strongly on the work of staff and the outcomes for pupils. A successful recent remodelling of the leadership structure is helping the school to continue to make progress.

Middle leaders are an integral part of the success of the school and most are highly effective. There is very good communication between senior and middle leaders and teachers. There is a high level of teamwork and accountability across the school.

The school's strategic priorities link pupils' emotional and academic development very effectively. Data is used regularly and robustly to set challenging targets for departments and pupils which are closely monitored.

The governing body knows the school well and operates as an effective critical friend, providing strong support. Worthwhile links between governors and departments are being developed.

The school takes full account of local and national priorities. The development of pupils' skills across the curriculum and the work done to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' attainment is exceptional.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is an established part of school life. As a result senior leaders know the school well and understand its strengths and areas that need improvement. Both senior and middle managers use a wide range of first hand evidence to judge the performance of their areas of responsibility.

Senior managers have used the performance management process in a very effective way to develop teachers' evaluative skills. As a result most have become skilled at drawing conclusions based on lesson observations, examining pupils' work and listening carefully to the views of pupils, parents and carers.

Planning for improvement draws on the results of self-evaluation to set targets for improvement. Many plans are good and allocate appropriate resources and responsibilities. While written plans outline success criteria, the identification of priorities is unclear.

The school is developing into a strong learning community. Groups of teachers work well together to drive specific initiatives. In particular a group of teachers has developed a 'literacy toolkit' that has played a significant role in raising standards by helping teachers improve the delivery of literacy across the curriculum.

The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection.

Partnership working: Good

The school works very well with a wide range of strategic partners to improve outcomes for its pupils. It shares its best practice widely.

Close consortium working at post-16 has led to worthwhile changes to the curriculum and has helped to improve resources. Where courses are shared, relevant quality assurance procedures are being developed.

The school works hard to engage with parents and carers. Review days are being trialled as an alternative to some parents' evenings and have succeeded in increasing the level of attendance. Parents report that the school's reputation in the community has improved significantly in recent years.

The school has excellent links with its partner primary schools and an effective transition plan. They work well together to ensure that there is strong continuity of wellbeing as pupils move from key stage 2 to key stage 3. The cluster has invested in family engagement and the development of personal effectiveness in pupils, initiatives that are helping to raise standards.

A number of subject departments work well with their primary colleagues to assure the continuity of learning as they move schools.

Good use is made of the school by the local community. Pupils represent the school well at local events. Pupils make a valuable contribution to raising money for local and national charities.

Resource management: Excellent

The school has managed its budget extremely effectively to turn a large deficit into a prudent surplus. This has enabled significant investment to be made into accommodation and resources over the last two years.

There is an appropriate complement of staff. The flexibility of teachers to deliver more than one subject is an important consideration in appointments and has helped to enable the successful introduction of the Welsh baccalaureate qualification and other new courses.

Departments are well resourced and manage their budgets effectively.

The school provides excellent value for money, achieving very positive outcomes for its pupils.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Standards in key stage 3 are good.

In key stage 3 in 2011, the core subject indicator was well above the average of similar schools on the free-school-meal benchmark. In both English and science at level 5 pupils' performance has been above average for the past two years. In English, performance at level 6 and above has been above average in two out of the past three years. In mathematics and in science performance at level 6 and above in 2011 was significantly above average.

The school's performance in the non-core subjects at key stage 3 is also good. It is above average in the majority of subjects when compared to similar schools.

At key stage 4, pupils' performance is outstanding.

The level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, the core subject indicator, the individual core subjects of English and mathematics and the level 1 threshold have been consistently in the top quarter of similar schools on the free-school-meal benchmark for the past three years. Performance in the level 2 indicator and in science has been significantly above average in two out of the past three years.

In the sixth form standards are good.

At post-16, the proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades has increased over the past four years. Performance at the level three threshold is broadly in line with Welsh averages and represents a good level of achievement for these pupils.

At both key stage 3 and key stage 4, girls outperform boys. In the core subject indicator and in English the difference in the performances of boys and girls is greater than the all Wales averages. In the sixth form, boys outperformed girls at the level 3 threshold.

The difference in performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not has decreased over the period since the school was last inspected. Increasing proportions of pupils in receipt of free school meals gain the core subject indicator in key stage 3 and in key stage 4 and in the sixth form.

More able pupils, as well as those with additional learning needs, make excellent progress.

In 2011, 82% of pupils remained in full-time education at the end of key stage 4. This figure is above the average for the local authority and for Wales. Just under 5% of pupils leaving in summer 2011 were not in education, training or employment. This figure is much better than the local average. In 2011 only one percent of pupils left school without a qualification.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

165 pupils completed questionnaires.

Nearly all report that they feel safe and that they are making good progress in school. Nearly all report that the school treats them with respect and prepares them well for the next stage of education, training or employment. Most report that they are taught how to keep healthy and many that there are opportunities at school to get regular exercise. Most report that the school is well supplied with resources and that the school listens to the suggestions they make.

Responses to Parent Questionnaires

21 parents completed questionnaires.

Nearly all reported that the school helped their child to settle in well and that he or she is making good progress. Many report that there is good behaviour in school and that parents are kept informed about their child's progress. Nearly all report that they school helps their child to mature and take on increasing responsibility. Many report that homework and project work is of value and builds well on what their child learns at school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Peter Harris	Reporting Inspector
Emyr Wyn Roberts	Team Inspector
Andrew Herdman	Team Inspector
David Hughes	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Alan Tootill	Peer Inspector
Hannah Castle	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Families of schools	These have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics.
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at the age of 16 or at the age of 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the age of 16.
All-Wales Core Data sets	Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.