



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

**Portmead Primary School
Cheriton Crescent
Portmead
Swansea
SA5 5LA**

Date of inspection: January 2013

by

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



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

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

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

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

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

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

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Context

Portmead Primary School is in Swansea and caters for 187 pupils between the ages of three and 11, including 42 part-time nursery children. The school is in the Penderry ward, the 13th most deprived area in Wales, and around 97% of the pupils come from this ward.

Most of the pupils enter the nursery with very limited literacy, numeracy, personal and social skills. Around 47% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is more than double the national and local averages. Portmead school is the most challenged in its family of broadly similar schools.

Nearly all pupils come from homes where the first language is English. There are a few from ethnic minority backgrounds and 9% speak English as an additional language. The school has identified about 40% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is well above the national average. Six have a statement of special educational needs. About 17% of pupils left or joined the school during the last year.

In recent years, there have been many changes in staff, especially in the senior management team. The headteacher was appointed in February 2005.

The school was last inspected in February 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for Portmead Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,425 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Swansea is £9,629 and the minimum is £2,634. Portmead Primary School is 43rd out of the 87 primary schools in Swansea in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Unsatisfactory

Current performance

The current performance of the school is adequate because:

- most pupils achieve good standards in speaking, listening and reading;
- standards of wellbeing are good;
- the school arranges effective provision to help pupils who need additional support; and
- pupils' behaviour is good.

However:

- the majority of pupils across the school do not make enough progress in writing;
- there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their Welsh, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum;
- the school does not use assessment information effectively to set challenging targets in order to raise standards; and
- the quality of teaching varies too much.

Prospects for improvement

The overall prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory because:

- pupils' progress, until relatively recently, has been too slow;
- self-evaluation processes are not embedded fully;
- a number of recent initiatives have not had time to impact fully on standards and provision;
- the school has made slow progress in addressing many recommendations from the last inspection; and
- the governing body's role as a critical friend has not developed well enough.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards in writing, numeracy, ICT and Welsh across the curriculum
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching so that it consistently challenges pupils of all abilities
- R3 Strengthen assessment procedures and assessment for learning across the school
- R4 Improve further the quality of leadership and management at all levels
- R5 Develop a robust monitoring system and ensure that self-evaluation is systematic and rigorous and focuses strongly on pupil outcomes
- R6 Develop further the role of governors as critical friends in self-evaluation and school improvement

What happens next?

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

In the Foundation Phase, almost all pupils make good progress. In the nursery and reception classes, they settle quickly into class routines and are confident in choosing activities and developing independence. Throughout the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2, most pupils listen, speak and co-operate well.

As a result of reading workshops, most pupils across the school develop good strategies for reading. More able ones read fluently, with expression and locate information confidently in non-fiction books. When reading fiction texts, most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the story. A minority of pupils make inferences and formulate their own implicit and explicit questions. Pupils of average and below average ability develop a firm grasp of phonics and a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words.

Across the school, progress in writing varies too much. By the end of the Foundation Phase, more able pupils produce short pieces of well-punctuated writing. They begin to use an interesting vocabulary and usually spell common words accurately. In key stage 2, a minority of pupils write for a variety of purposes and demonstrate a good understanding of the different forms of writing. However, many pupils struggle to structure their writing or to develop their ideas. Many have an insecure grasp of grammar and punctuation. Across the school, pupils' spelling and handwriting are often insecure. The standard of their presentational skills is weak and pupils' work is often very untidy in books.

Many pupils have adequate numeracy and ICT skills. However, they do not apply these well enough across the curriculum. Many develop their thinking skills well.

Most pupils enjoy learning Welsh, but standards are adequate overall. Many pupils understand the instructions and incidental Welsh used by staff, but few pupils are confident enough to speak Welsh to others, and they use a very narrow vocabulary.

Pupils who need extra help with their learning do well and many make good progress. Pupils who have support for English as an additional language also do well. Pupils entitled to free school meals generally attain as well as other groups of pupils.

In the Foundation Phase, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level (outcome 5) in the skills of literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development combined is above the family average and marginally below the all-Wales average.

In teacher assessments at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level (level 4 or above) has been generally lower than the average for the family in English, mathematics and science, apart from in 2011 and

2012. The results have been lower than the all-Wales average over the last five years. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the schools' performance in 2012 places it in the top 50% of similar schools for literacy, mathematical development, and personal and social development at the end of the Foundation Phase.

At the end of key stage 2, the school has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for performance in English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator, but there has been an improving trend over the last two years.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils enjoy their work and concentrate well in class. They behave well, show high levels of respect, care and concern for others and take on responsibility readily. They work together effectively in pairs or groups in many lessons.

Most pupils show a good understanding of the importance of health, fitness and healthy living and many of them take part in extra-curricular activities that promote these aspects.

Pupils are actively involved in decision-making within the school. In particular, the school and eco councils have undertaken a number of useful activities, such as running a school fruit tuck shop, to raise funds and to help to improve the school environment. Pupils participate in a wide range of community activities. Pupils develop their life and social skills successfully and older pupils act as 'buddies' and look after the younger ones.

The overall rate of attendance last year was just below 93% and, compared with similar schools, this placed the school in the lower middle quarter. This has improved from just below 87% four years ago. Very few children arrive late for school.

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

The school provides an interesting range of learning experiences based on a broad and balanced curriculum. The Foundation Phase provides a good range of activities for learning outdoors and these contribute effectively to the pupils' desire to discover and to learn.

Teachers identify appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' communication, numeracy and ICT skills in medium-term planning. However, a consistent approach to short-term planning is a relatively new initiative and matching activities well to pupils' abilities is not a consistent feature of all lessons.

A wide range of clubs, visits and extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum well and helps to develop pupils' learning.

The school makes appropriate provision for the promotion of the Welsh language, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills outside of Welsh lessons. Provision for pupils to develop their understanding of the history and culture of Wales is limited.

The school promotes education for sustainable development well, but there are very limited opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of the lives and cultures of other people across the world.

Teaching: Adequate

Most staff establish positive working relationships with pupils that promote appropriate learning. Most teachers and support staff are good role models and generally manage pupils' behaviour effectively. In the majority of classes, where teaching is good, lessons are prepared well and staff use a wide range of teaching approaches. Teachers conduct sessions at a brisk pace, they have good subject knowledge, use praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement well to encourage learning and generally use resources well to stimulate pupils.

However, in almost a half of the lessons observed, where there are areas for improvement in the quality of teaching, the activities are not matched well enough to pupils' abilities, the pace of learning is too slow and teaching does not challenge pupils of all abilities to achieve to the best of their ability.

The school gathers an increasingly wide range of assessment data and a whole-school approach to tracking pupils' progress is in place. However, staff do not always analyse the available data well enough to plan learning effectively for all pupils and to set challenging targets for improvement.

Teachers generally provide appropriate oral feedback to pupils. They mark pupils' work regularly with positive comments, but do not consistently indicate how pupils can improve their work. Staff do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. Annual reports to parents provide clear information about pupils' achievements and identify suitable targets for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements to support the development of pupils' health and wellbeing. Provision for personal and social education is embedded well across all aspects of the curriculum and in the daily work of the school. The school promotes pupils' moral and social development successfully, but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to contribute to acts of collective worship. Pupils have extensive opportunities to take part in a good range of cultural activities.

The school provides an inclusive environment for pupils and all pupils feel safe in school. The school focuses well on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of children's rights and these principles permeate the school community. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

Support for vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs is a strong feature of the school and results in improved confidence and progress for these pupils. Staff identify pupils with additional learning needs quickly and give them effective support. The additional needs' co-ordinator tracks their progress regularly and carefully.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school effectively promotes an inclusive environment and values the background and diversity of its pupils. Pupils have equal access to all aspects of provision and there is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. The school promotes the values of equality and fairness well.

The school buildings are generally well maintained and spacious. Pupils benefit from a wide range of resources that are appropriate to their needs. The school has developed outdoor learning areas, which staff use effectively to provide purposeful areas for teaching and learning. There are attractive displays in classrooms that celebrate pupils' achievements and demonstrate the caring ethos that is evident throughout the school.

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

The headteacher creates a caring and supportive ethos for learning and, as a result, staff feel valued and generally work well together. However, leaders have not focused enough since the last inspection on improving standards and the quality of provision in the school.

Over the last few years, the school's senior leadership team has experienced a period of significant instability. As a result, there has been a general lack of direction in making and sustaining improvements in many areas of the life and work of the school. However, the re-structured senior management team is beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. There is a sense of renewed purpose and a determination to raise standards and improve the quality of provision.

Staff roles and responsibilities are defined appropriately. Curriculum co-ordinators have recently gained a better understanding of their roles and are developing a better whole-school overview of their subjects. There are appropriate systems in place for the performance management of staff. These focus appropriately on the professional development needs of staff and the school's development priorities.

Governors are supportive of the school. They are beginning to use data more effectively to have an appropriate understanding of the standards and quality of teaching across the school. However, they have not developed their roles as critical friends enough in challenging senior leaders to secure improvements and higher standards.

The school is making good progress in meeting local and national priorities. The reading and writing workshops, for example, are having a positive impact on pupils' literacy standards. The Foundation Phase, the healthy schools agenda and education for sustainability are embedded well. However, global citizenship is at an early stage of development.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

Overall, leaders and managers have not sufficiently developed areas for improvement and the systems for planning and monitoring school improvement have not been rigorous enough. The school has recently put into place more structured monitoring procedures, including lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work. However, these procedures are not sufficiently robust and do not focus sharply on pupils' standards.

The current school self-evaluation report and development plan are appropriate and identify the main areas for improvement. Responsibilities, actions and timescales are clearly set out in the development plan. Most members of staff are aware of the school's priorities for improvement and their role in bringing about the desired results.

Overall, the school has made slow and inadequate progress over the past six years in meeting the recommendations of the last inspection report.

The school works well with other primary schools and secondary schools through professional learning communities and it is involved in successful cluster initiatives. Within the school, staff do not share best practice or their professional knowledge as successfully as they could to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that whole-school initiatives, such as assessment for learning strategies, are effectively and consistently delivered.

Partnership working: Good

The school has close partnerships with parents and is responsive to their views. Family learning programmes are having a positive impact on parents' ability to support their children with homework. The revived parent-teacher association raises funds for various school resources, and parents recently helped purchase ICT equipment. Links with the local community are also having beneficial effects on pupils' reading ability and wellbeing.

The local authority has provided a great deal of support over the last year in helping the school to evaluate its standards and provision, in taking forward curricular developments, especially in relation to reading and, more recently, in writing.

There are close links with other local primary schools to organise workshops on reading and writing. Good links with the comprehensive schools ensure smooth transition for Year 6 pupils to secondary education. Appropriate joint cluster arrangements are in place to moderate end of key stage teacher assessments.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has enough suitably qualified teachers to teach the curriculum appropriately. It also has a sufficient number of teaching assistants to support teachers' work effectively. There are appropriate arrangements for staff development and for providing preparation, planning and assessment time for teachers.

The headteacher and senior leadership team are involved appropriately in the performance management of staff. Staff have an opportunity to contribute to the process, which identifies and addresses their development needs appropriately.

The school budget is managed appropriately and resources are provided to meet the needs and priorities identified in the school development plan. In view of the recent improvements in pupils' standards and the good level of care and support, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the Foundation Phase, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level (outcome 5) in the skills of literacy, language and communication, mathematical development and personal and social development combined is above the family average and slightly below the all-Wales average.

In teacher assessments at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4 or above) has been lower than the average for the family in English, mathematics and science, apart from in 2011 and 2012. The results have been lower than the all-Wales average over the last five years.

The proportion of pupils who attain above the expected level in the Foundation Phase (outcome 6) is relatively low compared to the family and all-Wales average. The proportion of pupils who attain above the expected level at the end of key stage 2 (level 5 or above) over the last three years has been lower than the family and all-Wales averages in English, while in mathematics and science it has been higher than the family and lower than the all-Wales averages.

Overall, boys tend to do much better than girls in attaining the expected level at the end of the Foundation Phase in mathematical development, while girls do better in personal and social development. Girls have performed better than boys in English, mathematics and science at the expected level at the end of key stage 2 over the last two years.

When benchmarked against schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the schools' performance in 2012 placed it mainly in the top 50% of similar schools for language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, and personal and social development at the end of the Foundation Phase.

Although at the end of key stage 2 the school has been in the lower 50% of similar schools for performance in English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator, there has been an improving trend over the last two years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-five parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Most expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school and this is in line with national comparisons. All parents say that their children like school. Many feel that staff treat their children fairly and with respect and many think that behaviour is good. Most agree that the school encourages their children to be healthy and to take regular exercise. Many parents who responded think that the school is well run and most understand what to do if they wish to make a complaint. All believe that pupils are helped to settle when they join the school and are confident that their children are safe there. Nearly all parents who returned the questionnaire think that their children are making appropriate progress. However, a few do not feel that they know enough about how well their children are doing. All parents think teaching is good and are happy that teachers expect pupils to do their best. Most believe that teachers help their children to become more mature and to take on responsibility so that they are well prepared for the move to the secondary school. Most parents think that their children receive enough additional support for their additional learning needs.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Eight-two pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and responses to many questions were positive. Nearly all agree that the school helps them to be healthy and provides them with plenty of opportunities to be physically active. Most feel that they are doing well and nearly all think that teachers and support staff help them to learn and to make progress. Nearly all pupils say that they feel safe in school and most know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset or are finding their work difficult. Nearly all pupils think that bullying is dealt with effectively. Nearly all think that there are enough resources to enable them to learn effectively and many believe that homework helps them to improve on their work in school. Around half of pupils are concerned that behaviour in lessons is not always good enough and that this sometimes prevents them from getting their work done as well as they could. A similar proportion have concerns about behaviour during lunch and break times. These are significantly higher than the national averages.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

David Evans	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Thomas Petherick	Lay Inspector
Paul Samuel	Peer Inspector
Kelvin Williams	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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 – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.