



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

**Stepaside C.P. School
Carmarthen Road
Kilgetty
Pembrokeshire
SA68 0UG**

Date of inspection: March 2012

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Context

Stepside Community Primary School opened as a new school in 1992. It is situated in the village of Kilgetty, Pembrokeshire. It serves the rural district of Amroth and Stepside, together with Kilgetty and Begelly. From 2007, the catchment area was enlarged to include pupils from Pentlepoir, following the closure of their village school.

There are 157 pupils on roll. There are 78 pupils in the Foundation Phase and 79 in key stage 2. Eighteen children currently attend the purpose-built nursery and 16 pupils attend the playgroup in the afternoon.

About 87% of pupils are from a white British background. The remainder come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, which include Gypsy/Roma and Traveller, European, Thai and Philippine families. A significant minority of families move into the school's catchment area for a relatively short period of time before moving on.

The school describes much of the area it serves as neither economically advantaged nor disadvantaged. However, a significant minority of pupils come from pockets of deprivation both within and outside the school's catchment area. Almost all pupils come from homes, where English is the main language, and a few pupils speak Welsh at home. Four pupils have English as an additional language.

The percentage of pupils having free school meals has increased significantly from about 9% at the time of the last inspection in 2006, to almost 28% at present. This is above the all-Wales average of around 20%.

The school has identified 50 pupils as having additional learning needs, which is about a third of the current school population. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs. Four pupils have extra support funded through health agencies. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The individual school budget per pupil for Stepside Community Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,527 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Pembrokeshire is £5,323 and the minimum is £3,000. Stepside Community Primary School is 30th out of the 61 primary schools in Pembrokeshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- it provides a good standard of education in often challenging circumstances for all pupils, a significant minority of whom have additional learning needs and other barriers to learning;
- pupils' current work indicates that many make appropriate progress and achieve good standards from year to year;
- vulnerable learners have good support and make appropriate progress in relation to their targets, often from a low base; and
- the quality of teaching is good overall.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- recent initiatives are having a positive impact on improving the literacy skills of all pupils, especially those of the significant minority of vulnerable learners;
- staff use assessment information to track pupils' progress effectively and pupils set their own targets to improve their own learning;
- self-evaluation is developing appropriately and provides an appropriate agenda for school improvement;
- management of the school is effective and focuses on improving the achievement of all pupils; and
- governors provide effective support and challenge and hold the school to account for areas that require improvement.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 improve the literacy skills of the significant minority of pupils who have additional learning needs, and other barriers to learning;
- R2 improve pupils' Welsh language skills; and
- R3 close the gap in attainment between pupils entitled to free school meals and the attainment of other pupils.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan, which will show how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many children enter school with skills below those normally expected for children of their age. About a third receive additional support for speech and language, while a few receive support for emotional and behavioural difficulties, and for medical reasons. Most pupils make good progress against their targets, and achieve well in line with their ability.

Across the school, many pupils speak and listen well in a range of contexts, and develop good reading skills. In the Foundation Phase, pupils use a wide range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils read fluently with good expression and understanding. They enjoy reading a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Many pupils make good progress in their writing skills. Younger pupils in the Foundation Phase practise mark-making when role-playing in a variety of contexts. Many older pupils show good letter formation, and write short sentences with correct spelling and punctuation.

In key stage 2, many pupils increasingly write independently, accurately, and at length for a variety of purposes and audiences, such as letters, stories, and poetry, using a good range of vocabulary. They apply their writing skills well in topic work across the curriculum. However, the literacy skills of the significant minority of pupils who receive additional support for reading and writing are less well developed. Though they make appropriate progress against their targets, this is often from a low base. Presentation of work and the handwriting of a few pupils in key stage 2 are at times untidy and unclear.

Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum teacher assessments at key stage 1 and key stage 2 has varied considerably over time when compared to that of schools in similar circumstances. Comparison with the performance of others in the family of schools is also often weak in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is due mainly to a significant number of pupils having additional learning needs, and pupils transferring from other schools and areas, sometimes for a short period of time, and at various ages and stages of skill development.

Consequently, National Curriculum teacher assessment results at the end of key stage 1 for the last two years place the school amongst the lowest 25% for English, and in the lower 50% for mathematics. Pupils do better in science, where results have placed the school amongst the top 25% and the upper 50% since 2008, when compared to schools in similar circumstances nationally. Overall, girls perform better than boys.

Teacher assessment results at the end of key stage 2 have also varied since 2008, placing the school at times amongst the upper 50%, and at other times in the lower 50%, when compared to other schools in similar circumstances in Wales. However, a separate analysis of the performance of pupils who have been in the school for a

consistent period of time, usually from entry at three years of age, is good, and sometimes very good. When compared to pupils in schools in Wales with a similar percentage of free school meals, these pupils' performance at seven and 11 years of age is consistently amongst the best 25% to 50% in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In 2010-2011, boys achieved slightly higher standards than girls overall. This contrasts with previous years, when girls did significantly better than boys.

Pupils entitled to free school meals do better at key stage 1 than at key stage 2, when compared to the other pupils. In 2010-2011, pupils entitled to free school meals achieved significantly lower results at 11 years of age than the other pupils.

Pupils at 11 years of age have done less well in their Welsh second language National Curriculum tests over the last two years than pupils of the same age in the family of schools, and when compared with average results for Wales as a whole. The gap widened in 2011. All pupils have positive attitudes to learning the language. They listen and respond appropriately in Welsh to greetings and general instruction. However, beyond these activities, pupils' Welsh language skills at 11 years of age are weak.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils say that they like coming to school, and that they feel safe there. They have positive attitudes to learning. Many support one another in lessons, enjoy their learning and work well in pairs and small groups. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about what they learn and the way in which they plan their learning with their teachers.

Pupils are regularly involved with the community through, for example, concerts and fund-raising events. The school council is well established and plays an active and effective part in the life of the school. Members have a good understanding of their role. They have been involved in decision-making and make a worthwhile contribution to improving the school environment. They are proud of the positions of responsibility that they undertake within the school, and show consideration and concern for their peers, for example by acting as playground buddies.

Most pupils are very polite to each other, to staff and to visitors. Pupils behave very well during lessons and around the school. All pupils know that they are expected to take responsibility for their actions and most show respect and consideration for others.

Pupils gain a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and of adopting a healthy lifestyle through the successful promotion of a wide range of initiatives. For example, they have healthy snacks at break times and enjoy participating in a wide range of sporting activities designed to keep them fit and healthy.

Pupils' overall attendance rate at 93% places the school among the lower 50% of similar schools nationally.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Learning experiences cover the National Curriculum and religious education requirements. Curriculum planning provides well for most pupils' needs and includes a variety of stimulating activities to develop their problem-solving skills. However, the more able, especially the older pupils in key stage 2, have work that is sometimes too easy for them, and does not provide sufficient opportunities for them to develop skills of independent learning.

All teachers and classroom support assistants work well with each other, and provide effective support for pupils within their classes, including those with additional learning needs. As a result, most pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The organisation of classes and groupings has a positive impact overall on the quality of learning. Good provision is made to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of their Welsh culture and heritage. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through a good range of learning experiences. The school provides an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities to stimulate and enhance learning.

The school promotes education for sustainable development and global citizenship successfully. Pupils are encouraged to recycle and to learn how to live sustainably. They have good knowledge of how their actions can impact on the environment. Pupils gain a very good understanding about their place in the wider world, for example through a number of links with European countries and through its links with Botswana through the Comenius project, along with their many charity fundraising efforts.

Teaching: Good

Teachers and learning support assistants have a clear understanding of pupils' needs, and provide a wide range of stimulating activities for them throughout the school. The teaching is organised effectively, with appropriate emphasis in the Foundation Phase on learning through play, and in promoting pupils' independent learning.

The quality of teaching in most lessons across the school is good. Teachers remind pupils regularly of the lesson's learning objectives and help them achieve well in their work. In these good lessons, teachers promote pupils' own confidence and ability to judge their own performance and the performance of others. A particular strength is the way in which teachers and learning support assistants work together to help those who have additional learning needs to play a full part in the life and work of the school. In the very few lessons where there are shortcomings, teachers do not match work sufficiently well to the needs of all pupils, especially the more able, and the teaching of Welsh in key stage 2 is not organised effectively enough to promote pupils' skill progression in the language.

Teachers make good use of their lesson evaluations, and use the information effectively to improve subsequent lessons for pupils. Effective strategies are also

used to enable pupils to recognise what they need to do to improve their work in lessons, and to make good progress in their learning. The school takes an active part in the local arrangements for assessment and moderation of pupils' work at the end of key stage 2. Teachers are developing sound moderation skills in order to promote accurate teacher assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. Procedures for assessment, recording and reporting are good and inform planning and teaching.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Pupils with additional learning needs and those with complex social and emotional needs receive very good support. The school provides a number of very effective literacy programmes for pupils to improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. The co-ordinator for additional learning needs is effective in communicating with staff, pupils, parents and outside agencies and monitors all support thoroughly to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress. Individual education plans are carefully agreed with pupils and have clear targets. Reviews of progress are carried out termly with regular parental consultations.

The school's policies and arrangements for promoting healthy living and wellbeing are appropriate. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities designed to promote personal fitness, which enhances their awareness of the benefits of healthy living. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well across the school.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The accommodation and facilities, including the extensive and well-resourced grounds and outdoor learning areas, provide a stimulating and safe environment to promote teaching and learning effectively. There are enough resources and these are matched well to pupils' needs

The school is accessible to pupils, parents and visitors with mobility difficulties. School buildings are maintained to a high standard.

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

Leadership: Good

The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school and has high expectations. Good leadership, together with effective teamwork, adds to a very good whole-school ethos. Effective senior management team meetings, staff meetings and a performance management structure also successfully help to improve learning and teaching.

The school's aims and strategic objectives focus well on raising pupils' standards, including those of the most vulnerable, in a supportive and caring environment. Governors support the school well and are knowledgeable about pupils' performance, and the issues that affect it. They use the information effectively to challenge the leadership in bringing about necessary improvements.

The school takes appropriate account of nearly all local and national priorities. It responds well to the local authority's initiatives to target the improvement of literacy, numeracy and in reducing the impact of poverty and additional learning needs on educational attainment. For example, the school responds effectively to the educational challenges of the local area, by working closely with the Pembrokeshire consortia of schools for pupils with additional learning needs. The school also makes a significant contribution towards the successful inclusion and integration of Gypsy and traveller pupils attending the school, through a very successful working partnership with the 'Priory Project' in Monkton in Pembroke. This specialist unit supports Gypsy and Traveller families throughout Pembrokeshire and a learning support assistant drawn from the Gypsy and Traveller community supports children well within Stepside school.

Improving quality: Good

The school uses a good range of evidence in identifying its strengths and areas for development. It takes into account the views of pupils, parents, the community, and the outcomes from classroom monitoring by teachers and the local authority, as well as other agencies.

Teachers analyse data from National Curriculum assessments effectively to indicate how well the school is performing in comparison with similar schools within the family, and against local and national averages.

The school improvement plan is effective in addressing nearly all areas that need development, and has allocated appropriate resources for the process. The school operates as a strong learning community. It works well with other schools to raise standards in literacy. For example, improvements in pupils' literacy and in their enthusiasm for learning was boosted from a visit their teachers made to a school in another local authority, identified as having good practice in teaching literacy.

Partnership working: Good

Good partnerships exist with most parents, the community, other schools within and outside the cluster, and educational partners, including the local higher education institution. The school has shared its highly successful Forest Schools initiative with schools within the local authority.

The school maintains effective partnerships with the schools in the area, including the local secondary school. These partnerships have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The playgroup on site provides well for the needs of the youngest children of pre-school age. The school liaises effectively with outside agencies to support all pupils, including the most vulnerable. In particular, there are effective partnerships with the Educational Psychology Service to cater for pupils with additional learning needs. The school plays an active part in the local school cluster arrangements for assessment, moderation and standardisation of pupils' work at the end of key stage 2.

Resource management: Good

The school identifies and allocates resources appropriately in line with the priorities identified in its school improvement plan. There is a good range of learning resources that staff use and manage well. The school manages its budget efficiently and systems for financial management are well established.

The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff and these are, in nearly all cases, deployed effectively. The school identifies and meets the needs of all teachers through well-understood performance management procedures. Effective arrangements exist for teachers to plan and prepare their lessons, and to mark and assess pupils' work.

The school is effective in achieving good outcomes for most of the pupils especially, who enter the school in nursery or reception, and who continue their education to the end of key stage 2. It also provides very good standards of care, support and guidance for all, including vulnerable and transient pupils. As a result, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Stepaside is the fifth most challenged of the 11 schools in the family at key stage 1, and of the 10 schools at key stage 2. Consequently, it would be predicted to rank in the mid table positions for pupil performance outcomes.

At both key stages, actual rankings varied, but were lower than expected for the majority of performance indicators. This is due mainly to a significant number of pupils with additional learning needs, and pupils transferring from other schools and areas, sometimes for a short period of time, and at various ages and stages of skill development. However, the performance of pupils who have been in the school for a consistent period of time is good, and sometimes very good. When compared to pupils in schools in Wales with a similar percentage of free school meals, these pupils' performance at seven and 11 years of age is consistently amongst the best 25% to 50% in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

When transient members of the class are excluded from the cohort data, the value added by the school to pupils' performance improves significantly. National Curriculum teacher results in 2010-2011 show that, of the 16 pupils in the original entry cohort, 100% achieved the expected level 4 in English and science while 94% achieved level 4 in mathematics. This would place the results for all three core subjects at key stage 2 in the upper quartile (the top 25% of schools for 2011). Performance in the core subject indicator would have been about 94%, which would have placed the original cohort of pupils in the top 25% nationally.

At the end of key stage 1, National Curriculum teacher assessment results for the last two years place the school among the lowest 25% for English and the core subject indicator, and the lower 50% for mathematics when compared to similar schools in Wales. Pupils do better in science, where results have placed the school among the top 25% and the upper 50% of schools since 2008. Apart from in English, pupils' performance at above the expected level (level 3) has been consistently higher in the core subjects of mathematics and science over the last few years than in other schools in the family. No boy, and only two girls, attained level 3 in writing in 2011. Fewer girls than boys attained level 3 in mathematics in 2011.

At the end of key stage 2, teacher assessment results have also varied since 2008, placing the school at times amongst the upper 50%, and at other times in the lower 50%, of schools. Pupils' performance in the core subjects and the core subject indicator at the expected level (level 4) was similar to family, school and all-Wales averages during 2007-2010, but fell below these averages in 2011, where all performance indicators placed the school amongst the lower 50% of similar schools. Pupils' performance at above the expected level (level 5) has varied over the last five years, but improved for all core subjects in 2011 and was similar to or above the family of schools average. Boys' performance has improved significantly over the last five years, when compared to that of girls. Relative performance levels were similar to or less than the all-Wales average for all indicators in 2010. Boys achieve better than the girls at level 5 in mathematics and science but girls achieve better in writing.

Pupils at 11 years of age have done less well in their Welsh second language National Curriculum tests over the last two years than pupils of the same age in the family of schools, and when compared with average results for Wales as a whole. The gap widened significantly in 2011.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

There were 13 responses to the questionnaire for parents or carers. The responses of this small sample have to be treated with caution, as they may not represent the views of the vast majority of parents who did not return the questionnaire. Overall, a majority expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school, stating that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best. Many agree that their children enjoy school, and feel that they were helped to settle in well when they first joined. The majority of parents state that their children are making good progress. Around a half state they are satisfied with the behaviour of children at the school. A majority of parents believe the quality of teaching is good, and state that teachers' expectations of their children are also good. Around a half of the parents who responded believe that homework does not build well enough on the work that their children do at school. Just under a half of the respondents state that their child does not receive appropriate additional support in relation to identified individual needs. The same percentage disagrees with the statement that they are kept well informed about their child's progress.

The majority believe that their child is safe at school, and that the school is well run. They are comfortable in approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems. The majority believe that the school encourages positive attitudes to healthy living, and lifestyle, and that staff treat all children fairly, and with respect. Just under a half state that they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints, and feel that the range of activities including trips or visits is good. Just over a half believe that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school. Around a half believe the school helps their child to become more mature, and take on responsibility.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Seventy-seven pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Most responses are positive. Generally, the responses are much the same as those of pupils from other schools inspected in Wales in recent years. Nearly all pupils say they feel safe in school, and know whom to talk to when they feel worried or upset. Nearly all state that the school deals with any bullying effectively and that the school helps them to keep healthy. They get lots of opportunities to be physically active. Nearly all feel that they are doing well at school, that they have enough equipment, books and computers to do their work, and that teachers and support staff help them to make progress. Nearly all know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard. Many pupils state that the behaviour of other pupils is good in class, and at playtime and lunchtime. However, nearly a quarter disagree about behaviour in class, and a few about other children's behaviour at playtime and lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Jeff Jones	Reporting Inspector
David Davies	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Karen Olds	Peer Inspector
Peter Griffiths	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 – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

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.