



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

**Ynysddu Primary School
High Street
Ynysddu
Caerphilly
NP11 7JH**

Date of inspection: June 2012

by

Dr. P. David Ellis

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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Publication date: 14/08/2012

Context

Ynysddu Primary School, opened in 1926 originally as a secondary school, is situated in the lower Sirhowy Valley approximately three miles south of the town of Blackwood. It serves the former mining village of Ynysddu and the surrounding locality, although a few pupils come from further afield. According to the school, the area comprises both private and local authority housing, accommodating both disadvantaged and more prosperous families, although around half live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. Around 35% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which has increased considerably in the past year and is well above the local authority and national averages. Pupils on entry represent the full range of ability.

There are currently 93.5 full-time equivalent pupils on roll between the ages of three and 11, including eight full-time four-year olds and seven part-time three-year olds in the nursery. There are four mixed-age classes, plus two specialist resource bases, both located at the school for four days per week. The number on roll has continued to decline since the last inspection. There are seven full-time teachers, including the headteacher.

Around 21% of pupils are registered as requiring additional learning needs support, which is similar to the national average; none has a statement. One pupil comes from an ethnic minority background and is provided with support in English as an additional language. No pupils use Welsh as their first language or are looked after by the local authority.

The school was last inspected in July 2006. Since then there have been a number of staff changes. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2009 following a 12 month period when there was an acting headteacher. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ynysddu Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4811 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £6779 and the minimum is £2494. Ynysddu Primary School is second out of the 75 primary schools in Caerphilly in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's performance is good because:

- in both key stages pupils' attainment overall at the expected levels 2 and 4 is above the family, local authority and Wales averages and better than the majority of similar schools;
- in both key stages pupils' performance in all aspects of literacy is above that of the family and improving;
- most pupils make good progress through the school;
- behaviour overall is good and attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection; and
- teaching is consistently good and occasionally excellent.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- standards are rising; in the Foundation Phase there is evidence of recent improvement, especially in English, and in key stage 2 there is a discernible upward trend at level 4;
- leadership overall is excellent; the system of distributed leadership is sector-leading;
- the governors' role is developing very well;
- self-evaluation is excellent and an integral part of school life; and
- assessment is a strength of the school with some excellent features.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

R1 ensure more able pupils achieve their full potential; and

R2 further develop provision for the Welsh language.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils in both key stages develop appropriate basic skills. Their performance in all aspects of literacy is above that of the family and improving. Across the school they display good oral skills. In the Foundation Phase they read well in relation to their age and ability and by the end of key stage 2 they are fluent readers; they use their reading skills effectively to improve their knowledge and understanding.

Nearly all pupils are confident writers relative to their stage of development. In key stage 2 they produce a good standard of extended writing for a variety of audiences and purposes across a range of genres. The majority develop good spelling skills and their presentation and handwriting are improving.

Nearly all pupils use their numeracy and information and communication technology skills effectively across all areas of the curriculum and in a range of contexts. The majority develop good thinking skills.

Standards of oral Welsh within the school are improving from generally a low starting point and overall are now good. All pupils gain in confidence and in key stage 2 the majority can read basic texts and are able to write simple sentences. By Years 5 and 6 they are able to use a variety of sentence patterns.

In 2011 in both key stages pupils' attainment overall at the expected levels 2 and 4 was better than the previous four years and above the family, local authority and Wales averages, although at the higher levels 3 and 5 it was below all three comparators. Performance in mathematics and science in both key stages has tended to be better than English.

Due to the small cohorts, results over time have fluctuated, although in the Foundation Phase there is evidence of recent improvement, especially in English, and in key stage 2 there is a discernible upward trend at level 4, where attainment is now better than the majority of similar schools.

In both key stages any gender differences in performance tend to be cohort specific, although boys generally achieve better in mathematics and science in key stage 2, particularly at the higher level.

Most pupils make good progress through the school, although the more able do not always fulfil their potential.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils know what it means to be fit and healthy. They are able to make healthy choices and understand the importance of regular exercise. They feel happy and safe in school.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Most display a considerable level of pride in their school community and are motivated in their work. They develop effective entrepreneurial skills and successfully apply a range of strategies to solve problems. Behaviour overall is good and all pupils are courteous and well-mannered.

Attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection and at 94.4% in the last year was above that for similar schools, as well as local and national averages. Unauthorised absence is low. All but a very few pupils arrive punctually at the start of the school day.

Pupils take on a range of responsibilities and are involved in planning their own learning. They are proactive in raising funds for various charities. The school council represents their views well and is instrumental in effecting positive changes to the school environment.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils. Teachers provide stimulating and enriching learning experiences that are matched well to individual ages and abilities, so that nearly all pupils are suitably challenged in their learning.

Provision for key skills is thoroughly planned and embedded into the experiences of all pupils. The strong focus on basic skills, together with specific strategies to develop reading, writing and presentation, is having a positive impact on standards, although provision for the more able, especially in reading, is at times insufficiently challenging.

Welsh language provision is effectively mapped and incidental Welsh is widely used throughout the day, but specific Welsh lessons are infrequent and staff expertise in the language is variable. The Welsh dimension is interwoven into subject areas and is further developed through focused activities, such as Welsh week and an eisteddfod.

Extra-curricular activities and carefully planned visits, events, residential experiences and community involvement effectively enhance pupils' learning.

The school has a wide range of activities promoting the importance of environmental sustainability, which are embraced by pupils and led by an enthusiastic eco committee. The school is also developing a number of links with other countries. However, the principles of sustainable development and global citizenship have yet to be embedded across the school.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is consistently good and occasionally excellent. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and very good subject knowledge; they continually praise pupils for their efforts and challenge them to succeed.

All teachers use a range of teaching and learning strategies that enable pupils to work independently and collaboratively. They consistently share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils and use appropriate questioning and class management techniques to maintain interest and participation.

All lessons are thoroughly prepared, well structured, effectively organised and conducted at a good pace. Support staff are deployed very effectively and make an important contribution to pupils' learning.

Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. All staff know pupils very well and have a very caring approach to their learning and wellbeing. They respond sensitively to individuals' specific needs and monitor their progress closely.

Assessment is a strength of the school with some excellent features. Pupils' progress is effectively managed through the use of standardised and diagnostic tests and the school's own tracking system that leads to realistic and challenging targets being set. Evidence is recorded systematically to ensure all teachers have intimate knowledge of each pupil's all-round development.

Assessment for learning strategies are implemented consistently across the school and are a prominent feature of teachers' planning, marking and classroom practice. Pupils are regularly involved in self and peer assessment activities, so that they know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Nearly all work is marked conscientiously and positive verbal and written feedback is provided, although the way forward is not always indicated.

Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through termly consultation meetings. Annual pupil reports are comprehensive and meet statutory requirements; they provide targets for future improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has arrangements and a range of initiatives to provide effective care, support and guidance for pupils.

Pupils access a wide range of activities that promote a healthy lifestyle. They have opportunities to take part in regular physical exercise and to learn about maintaining a balanced diet.

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Personal and social education is integrated successfully into the life of the school through a range of programmes and procedures, led by the pastoral team.

There is a whole-school behaviour management policy, based on class and school rules. Various strategies have been developed to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour. On the rare occasions when behaviour is challenging, teachers deal with it effectively.

Much has been achieved in recent years in improving levels of attendance. There is a successful combination of individual and class incentives and targeted interventions. Certificates are awarded each week for good attendance, as well as outstanding achievement, effort and good behaviour.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

The school effectively identifies and addresses the needs of pupils with additional learning needs and implements a number of intervention strategies to enable them to make progress. Individual education and behaviour plans are pupil-friendly and closely monitored; parents are involved in the review process.

The school has good links with external agencies and specialist services, particularly in relation to the two resource bases located at the school; both make very good provision for pupils with specific needs, who are successfully integrated into the life of the school.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a very positive ethos, based on its mission statement and core values. All pupils and staff are treated equally as members of an inclusive community that promotes tolerance and equality.

Most pupils feel the school deals well with any incidents of bullying and nearly all know who to go to if they feel upset. There are no recorded instances of discrimination or other forms of harassment.

The school values and celebrates diversity and ensures that the curriculum reflects the issues and needs of a multicultural society. Pupils develop an appropriate understanding of, and compassion for, other people.

Much work has been undertaken recently to improve the physical accessibility of the school. Use has been made of extensive government funding to address the majority of issues highlighted in the school's accessibility plan, so that there is now full disabled access to all parts of the site.

The well-maintained building and grounds meet the needs of pupils well. Classrooms are of a suitable size and the learning environment is enhanced by high quality displays. The multi-use games court, the garden and the wildlife area are particularly valuable assets.

Overall, learning resources are of good quantity and quality. The provision for information and communication technology is particularly good with a well-resourced computer suite, supported by laptops and emerging technology hardware for use in classrooms.

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

The school is very well led and managed. Rising standards indicate that innovations introduced by the recently appointed leaders are having a significant impact on pupils' performance.

The headteacher has taken the school forward in many ways and achieved a great deal since his appointment in 2009. He has established very good relationships with all stakeholders and promotes a collaborative culture in which all strive to do their best. His efficiency and rigour in establishing many effective systems and structures are clear strengths.

The new deputy headteacher has made an immediate impact. She is very supportive and is making a major contribution to several recent initiatives. She works well with the headteacher and other staff and models good classroom practice.

The system of distributed leadership, based on a cohesive team approach, is sector-leading. Every member of staff is involved and the designated teams include a link governor and prospectively a pupil. Each team and its subsidiary groups have a clear remit for taking responsibility for an aspect of the whole school's development. The model has been disseminated to other schools and educational leaders.

Governors are supportive and kept well informed. They are becoming more actively involved in the management of the school, for example through 'governor of the month' visits. They also have subject interests and are linked to specific cohorts of pupils.

Governors are familiar with pupils' achievements and the school's priorities. They complete an annual self-review questionnaire and an audit of current issues in order to improve their role, culminating in an annual governing body development plan.

All statutory policies are in place and most are signed and dated; there is a rolling programme of policy review. The prospectus and governing body's annual report to parents meet nearly all the new requirements.

The school effectively addresses a range of local and national priorities.

Improving quality: Excellent

The self-evaluation process is driven by the leadership teams. The system is owned by all stakeholders and informed by rigorous data analysis and clear performance monitoring procedures. The different tools used and the strong team culture are excellent features which are having a direct impact on standards.

Besides being team members, all teachers are subject leaders and monitor their areas of responsibility very thoroughly in accordance with an agreed timetable, producing annual action plans. They make a major contribution to school improvement.

All pupils are actively encouraged to share their views and raise issues, particularly through the school council and listening to learner arrangements. Parent and

governor surveys are undertaken on an annual basis and the results of these inform the strategic planning process.

The school's development plan is a detailed and comprehensive working document which sets out clear priorities and actions to bring about improvement. Targets are clearly informed by the self-evaluation data and aligned with national and local priorities.

All recommendations from the previous inspection have been comprehensively addressed.

All staff are encouraged to be reflective practitioners. They are involved in a range of professional learning communities and networks within and beyond the school. The very positive culture of collaboration and openness has helped to make these a success.

Partnership working: Good

The school has developed good links with a range of partners. It has a well-established relationship with parents and keeps them well informed; nearly all are happy with their child's progress and most approve of the homework arrangements. There is an active friends' association that works hard to support the school.

There are many positive links with the local community. A good feature is the use of an allotment by both pupils and the community. The school building is used for a variety of community activities and there is a mother and toddler group on site, which facilitates entry into the nursery.

There are good transition links with the main receiving secondary school and primary cluster partners. Teachers meet within the school and with the cluster on a regular basis to moderate and standardise work in the core subjects.

The additional needs co-ordinator works effectively in partnership with two other schools in the local authority that have similar resource bases. This ensures the wellbeing of all pupils involved.

The school has forged positive partnerships with the local authority and a range of institutions.

Resource management: Good

The school has a full complement of well-qualified and experienced staff, all of whom are effectively deployed and managed.

Ancillary staff make an important contribution to the efficient administration and maintenance of the school.

Performance management procedures meet statutory requirements and are linked closely to individual and whole school priorities. All staff, including ancillary and lunchtime supervisors, are involved and have targets for improvement.

All staff have received relevant training in the past year, linked to their performance management targets and team roles. In-house staff development also occurs regularly. There is a professional development plan and the impact of training is carefully monitored.

All requirements of the national workload agreement are met. Teachers' allocated management time and their planning, preparation and assessment time are effectively organised through the employment of external specialists and a higher level teaching assistant.

The school has a welcoming and orderly appearance. The accommodation is well managed and subject leaders effectively monitor the use and impact of resources in their curricular areas.

The school works closely with the local authority to manage all aspects of the budget. The large historical underspend has now been substantially reduced. The most recent audit report indicates that financial controls have improved.

Consistently good outcomes in terms of standards and provision ensure the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2011 in key stage 1 pupil performance overall and in English at the expected level 2 was better than the previous four years and above the family, local authority and Wales averages. In mathematics and science it was above the family, but below the local authority and Wales averages, although over time results in these two subjects have tended to be better than English. At the higher level 3, performance in each core subject was below all three comparators. Results at both levels have fluctuated, but there is evidence of recent improvement, especially in English, although attainment remains generally below that of similar schools.

In 2011 in key stage 2 pupil performance overall and in each of the three core subjects at the expected level 4 was better than the previous four years and above or similar to the family, local authority and Wales averages. As in key stage 1, results over time have tended to be better in mathematics and science than English. At the higher level 5 performance in each core subject was below all three comparators. Results at level 4 indicate a discernible upward trend and are now better than the majority of similar schools, but they are uneven at level 5.

Pupil performance in 2011 in key stage 1 in all aspects of literacy was better than the family average, but below the local authority and Wales averages, although in key stage 2 it was above or similar to all three comparators. In both key stages there is an upward trend recently in attainment, although the majority of pupils continue to read below their chronological age.

In both key stages any gender differences in performance are cohort specific, although boys overall tend to achieve better in mathematics and science in key stage 2, particularly at the higher level.

Most pupils make good progress through the school, although the more able do not always fulfil their potential.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received (less than 10).

Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirty-three pupils completed the questionnaire.

All pupils consider:

- they learn how to keep healthy;
- they are doing well at school;
- they are helped to learn and to make progress; and
- they know who to ask if they find their work hard.

Nearly all pupils think:

- they feel safe in school;
- they know who to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- they have plenty of opportunities for regular exercise; and
- that homework helps them to improve their work in school.

Most pupils agree:

- the school deals well with any bullying;
- they have enough books and equipment; and
- nearly all pupils behave well at playtimes and lunch time.

Many pupils believe:

- that other pupils behave well so they can get their work done.

All responses, except for having enough books and equipment, are better than national norms.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dr. P. David Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Mrs. Owenna Davies	Team Inspector
Mr. Ted Tipper	Lay Inspector
Mr. Adrian Dinsmore	Peer Inspector
Mr. John Farmer	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.