



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
Penrhiwceibr Primary School**

**Church Street
Penrhiwceibr
Mountain Ash
CF45 3YD**

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Peter Mathias

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

Penrhiwceibr is a primary school in the Cynon Valley which serves the once mining community of the same name which is now a Communities First area. Rhondda Cynon Taff is the local authority (LA). Currently there are 142 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven years of age. This includes nine who attend the learning support class (LSC) for KS1 pupils with complex to severe learning difficulties who have come from a wider area. Generally attainment on entry is below expected levels. Numbers are slightly lower than in November 2004 when the school was last inspected.

Generally pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds reflecting the fact that the area is considered to be the 20th most deprived area in Wales. Forty eight per cent of pupils are considered eligible for free school meals which is above local and national averages.

Nearly all pupils are from English speaking homes. Five pupils have Polish backgrounds. Of these one has support in English as an additional language (EAL).

While no pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN), 25% of pupils are considered to have some degree of additional learning needs (ALN). These are higher than average figures. No pupil was excluded in the previous school year.

The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award, Eco-Schools Bronze Award.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2003.

The individual school budget per pupil for Penrhiwceibr Primary School is £4,342 which compares with a maximum of £9,525 and a minimum of £2,553 for primary school pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The school has the 22nd highest budget per pupil out of the 116 schools in the authority.

Summary

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| The school's current performance | Good |
| The school's prospects for improvement | Adequate |

Current performance

The school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress and attain well for them in Key stage 2 (KS2) national assessments;
- pupils who attend the Key stage 1 (KS1) unit make good progress in their all round development;
- links with the local community are strong and beneficial;
- the care and well being of all pupils are central to the work of the school; and
- links with support agencies are extensive and effective.

Prospects for improvement

- although results are good overall very few pupils reach the higher level in the national teacher assessments in KS2;
- while the school self-evaluation document is detailed and accurate it does not currently involve all stake holders sufficiently;
- the school development plan (SDP) is well constructed and carefully focussed on the needs of the school;
- headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future;
- the governing body (GB) does not hold the professional leadership sufficiently to account; and
- while there are strengths in the school's provision, the shortcomings identified in teaching and assessment outweigh the good features and there are no important areas requiring significant improvement in learning experiences and wellbeing. The school is in the process of addressing these. It has yet to make the progress necessary to support a higher grade to match those given to Key Question 1 and Key Question 3.

Recommendations

Inspectors have agreed with the school the following recommendations for improvement.

- R1 raise standards in the use of information communications technology (ICT) in other subjects and put in place arrangements so that all learners develop their key skills and skills for learning systematically;
- R2 have higher expectations for those who are identified as more able or gifted or talented and plan consistently for them to have an appropriate level of challenge;
- R3 make the good quality of teaching consistent across the school;
- R4 improve learners understanding of how to evaluate constructively their own work and that of others and make them more aware of the small steps they need to take in order to make progress;
- R5 increase the role of the GB as a critical yet supportive friend of the professional leadership of the school; and
- R6 improve the school self evaluation procedures so that all stakeholders are properly involved in the process.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the LA who will report their findings to Estyn.

Main findings

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| Key Question 1: How good are outcomes? |
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| Good |
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Standards: Good

Over the last three years the performance of eleven year olds has fluctuated slightly and has been just below national and local averages. Over the same period results for seven year olds have risen from a low point in 2008. Currently they are below local and national averages. When the performance of those pupils in the LSC is discounted, there is a slightly higher but similar picture in the results.

Pupils generally make good progress from the time they begin school in the nursery until they leave at eleven years of age, bearing in mind the low starting points of many.

Results for seven year olds in 2010 show the school to be in the bottom 25% of schools with broadly the same kind of free school meals entitlement. Results for eleven year olds in 2010 compare well with schools in similar circumstances. In these national teacher assessments results were in the top 50% in English and in the top 25% in mathematics and science. The combined results place the school in the top 50% of these schools. However, no pupil achieved the higher level (Level 5) as has been the case over recent years. In the 2010 assessments, as in previous years, girls out performed boys. The overall performance at the end of KS2 placed the school second in the family of schools across Wales to which is currently belongs.

Pupils generally make good progress across the curriculum. Children in the Foundation Phase achieve well. However, the more able or gifted and talented do not make the progress of which they are capable. Progress in the development of the key skills and skills for learning are adequate overall.

Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are good. However, standards in numeracy and the use of information communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum are only adequate. Across the school and particularly in KS2, all pupils do not employ the skills they have learnt in ICT lessons sufficiently in other subjects such as design technology, science and geography. They do not have a clear understanding of how to evaluate their work and how to use that information to improve. Pupils' Welsh language skills are good. Many leave the school as confident speakers in English and Welsh.

Wellbeing: Good

The school's motto of 'Be Good, Do Good, Feel Good' is ingrained in all pupils.

Attendance has improved over the last three years and is at currently at 90.2% which is below LA and Wales national percentages. Working closely with the LA, the school aims to meet its target of 92% in the current year.

Behaviour during school assembly, at break and dinner time is excellent. Pupils are courteous and polite at all times to adults and towards each other. Pupils' views are listened to for example, the school council and the newly formed eco-committee. However, they do not plan schemes of work and make choices about how and what they learn.

Pupils are given good opportunities to play a full part within the wider community. Close partnerships have been established with the local Educational Business Partnership (EBP). The Penrhiwceibr Landmark project was carried out with co-operation and funding from Penrhiwceibr Communities First .

School council members are given opportunities to voice their decisions on school issues. They also gain experience of decision making and the democratic process at local, national and UK level.

Pupils show respect for each other and have a willingness to help and care for others at all times during the inspection. They also show an awareness of the skills required to improve their own learning. They are all given the opportunity to voice their opinions on decisions about their life in school.

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| Key Question 2: How good is provision? |
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|-----------------|
| Adequate |
|-----------------|

Learning experiences: Good

Pupils showed an understanding of the importance of sustainability issues with the newly formed eco-committee keen to play their part in further promoting this to make the school a better place for all.

The school emphasises the importance of environmental issues and has strong links with their partner school in Zimbabwe. Pupils' understanding of the wider world is enhanced through this relationship.

Pupils' skills in numeracy are good but their use in other subjects is less well developed.

Provision for communication, numeracy and ICT in the Foundation Phase and KS1 is planned well and firmly embedded into the experience of all pupils. At KS2 pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their communication, numeracy and ICT skills

Teaching: Adequate

The overall quality of teaching is adequate with no examples of outstanding teaching. Good features include very good relationships between adults and pupils and a calm and purposeful atmosphere in most classes.

Where there are shortcomings, activities are over directed by the teachers and the most able are not challenged sufficiently. In a minority of lessons the pace of learning is too slow and opportunities are missed to promote discussion and develop pupils' abilities to use English and Welsh together. Teachers do not give sufficient

emphasis in pointing out to pupils how they themselves could improve their work and set short-term individual targets for this to be achieved.

The quality of assessment is adequate. A majority of teachers use assessment for learning strategies effectively. Pupils receive good oral feedback during lessons, teacher comments are not always clear enough for pupils to improve their work. Some pupil self assessment and target setting takes place but this has not been developed throughout the school.

Assessment is undertaken regularly and is only beginning to be used to track individual pupils.

A start has been made in increasing the challenge for the most able and in using assessment information more effectively. However, these initiatives have not, as yet, had a significant impact.

Parents and carers are satisfied with the way the school provides them with clear guidance and information via newsletters and school web-site.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective arrangements exist to support the pupils' health and wellbeing. They are encouraged to get involved in their school and the wider community and to show respect to others. Their learning experiences through school assembly, during school visits and residential courses support their personal development which takes into account their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.

The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place in respect of safeguarding and has effective recruitment, disciplinary and reporting arrangements. The school works in partnership with key agencies to protect the pupils.

The school is a well-organised and caring community which reflects the commitment of all those involved in teaching and learning.

Provision for ALN is good. Difficulties are identified early and rapidly addressed. Those in the LSC are very well supported and play a full part in the life of the school. Parents are kept well informed and fully involved.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Morning worship sessions are effective in encouraging the sense of awe and wonder and promote pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimension to life. The school successfully promotes pupils' understanding of their Welsh heritage and the cultures of other peoples.

Learning environment: Good

The school promotes equal opportunities well. There is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. There are extensive arrangements for all pupils to take on responsibilities and to be useful members of their school community.

There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers and assistants who are effectively deployed. Resources for teaching and learning are adequate. The accommodation is well maintained and provides a stimulating environment for learning.

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

Leadership: Good

The headteacher provides a thoughtful and pragmatic lead. He works closely and effectively with the deputy headteacher and all staff to make the school a positive and caring environment for teaching and learning. Much has been achieved recently in improving provision for the Foundation Phase and in putting in place initiatives to provide pupils with a voice in the school.

The school has addressed many national and local priorities successfully. Extensive links with other schools in the area are mutually beneficial and well used to extent teachers' expertise. Good progress has been made in the standards pupils reach in using English and Welsh together. Nearly all have a good understanding of their Welsh heritage, of their place in the wider world and of their responsibilities to it. However, the development of key skills and skills for learning is limited.

The governing body is very committed to supporting the school. Individual governors have established links with subject co-ordinators to strengthen their understanding of the standards being achieved. Their role in constructively challenging the professional leadership and in being thoroughly involved in assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses are only adequate.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation program accurately identifies the school's strengths and areas for development. It is well used to set clear priorities for improvement and to allocate resources to that end. In the process, careful note has been taken of the views of pupils, parents and the broader community. However, there has been limited input from teachers and other members of staff. They have not been fully involved in for example, looking at the quality of teaching and learning and in sharing expertise, for example in ICT.

Staff have appropriate opportunities for professional development in line with their own responsibilities, for example in the introduction of the Foundation Phase and as part of performance management arrangements. Staff have increased their understanding of current standards and expectations through close collaboration with local schools, particularly in English, mathematics and science. There are no other networks with other schools, for example those in the school's family across Wales

Partnership working: Good

The school has strong and well used links with outside agencies and specialist services. The school plays a full part in the local community. Help with partnerships with parents and carers from entry to the school are well established. Nearly all

parents in the survey felt well informed about their children's progress and were confident to approach the school if they needed to contact it. There are good links with employers through the local EBP.

Links with the secondary school are well established and include shared work projects prior to transfer. Links with the secondary school are very influential in agreeing standards for pupils of eleven years of age.

Resource management: Good

The school is well resourced and appropriately staffed, teachers and their assistants are well deployed. The site is well maintained and internal accommodation is good. Managers have responded appropriately to the need to address the national agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload'. The budget is well managed.

By the age of eleven many pupils achieve well for them and benefit from the overall good quality of education they receive and the school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

A minority of parents completed the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed very positive views of the school. All were satisfied with the school and believed that their children liked it. They all felt that the school helped their children to settle in and to make good progress. They all felt that staff held high expectations of what their children could achieve and taught them well. All were pleased that the school was very mindful of their children's health, wellbeing and safety. They felt that their children were well supported and given good opportunities to take on responsibilities. They all felt comfortable about approaching staff.

A few that responded felt that preparation for transfer to the secondary school could be improved. Similarly a few did not have a good understanding of how the school dealt with complaints and had concerns about behaviour. A very few had concerns about the relevance of the homework set.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Many learners completed the questionnaire. All agreed that they felt safe in school and the school encouraged them to be healthy and to learn well.

Nearly all thought that the school dealt with bullying effectively and nearly all knew who to talk to if they were unhappy. They felt that they had good opportunities to get regular exercise.

Nearly all thought they were doing well and knew what to do if they found work difficult. Most liked homework, however a few felt they lacked enough equipment including computers to learn effectively and a minority felt that behaviour at playtimes and in their classes is sometimes a problem.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Peter Mathias | Reporting Inspector |
| Helen Smith | Team Inspector |
| Glenda Jones | Lay Inspector |
| Spencer Williams | Peer Inspector |
| Richard Makin | School Nominee |

Contractor:

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Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| Year | R | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 |
| Ages | 4-5 | 5-6 | 6-7 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 | 10-11 |

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Key stage 1 | Year 1 and Year 2 |
| Key stage 2 | Year 3 to Year 6 |
| Key stage 3 | Year 7 to Year 9 |
| Key stage 4 | Year 10 and Year 11 |