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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Maes Yr Haul Primary School

Ffordd Tirion

Broadlands

Bridgend

CF31 5EG

Date of inspection: 18 - 20 January 2011

by

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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

Maes Yr Haul Primary School opened in 2001 with 145 pupils. It is now the largest primary school in Bridgend Local Authority (LA) with 542 pupils on roll, aged from three to eleven, taught in 19 mainstream classes, including two for those of nursery age. The school was extended in 2007 to accommodate the growing number of pupils, many of whom join in key stage 1 (KS1) and KS2 with the result that cohort sizes and class structures vary from year to year. The school also houses a resource base of a local special school for pupils aged three to seven, which is subject to separate inspection arrangements; two pupils registered at the same special school also attend mainstream classes at Maes Yr Haul.

The school is located on the growing Broadlands estate, which contains a mixture of privately owned and housing association residences. The local population comprises mainly young families which are relatively mobile. Around 5% of pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals, which is well below the national and local averages. Approximately 23% are identified as requiring additional learning needs (ALN), which is similar to the national average; none has a statement in line with LA policy. No pupils are natural Welsh users. Around 7% come from an ethnic minority background and about 1% receive support in English as an additional language.

The school was last inspected in March 2005. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2010. During the inspection the deputy headteacher was on long-term sick leave and her role was undertaken by two key stage leaders acting as assistant headteachers. Two other teachers were also away during the inspection and were replaced by temporary supply cover.

The 2010-11 individual school budget per pupil for the school is £2758, which compares with a maximum of £4826 and a minimum of £2758 for primary schools in the Bridgend Authority. The school has the lowest budget per pupil of the 52 primary schools in Bridgend.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- standards in both key stages overall are better than local and national averages, especially at the higher levels 3 and 5;
- there is a well-ordered, caring and inclusive ethos that ensures pupils' wellbeing is a strong feature;
- teaching and assessment overall are good;
- there is effective leadership and management;
- the accommodation provides a stimulating learning environment; and
- there are good quality resources and facilities.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is a trend of sustained improvement in standards in both key stages and pupils make good progress through the school;
- the school is implementing a number of initiatives to raise standards and to improve the quality of provision;
- the senior management team and governing body (GB) have a clear vision for the strategic direction of the school;
- the new leadership and management structures are taking the school forward;
- team work is being successfully developed; and
- the school has robust self-evaluation procedures.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve its current standards and quality of provision, the school needs to:

- R1 address the shortcomings identified in the Foundation Phase provision;
- R2 continue to raise standards and improve provision for Welsh second language development; and
- R3 develop further opportunities for pupils to become independent learners.

What happens next?

Maes Yr Haul Primary School will create an action plan which shows how it will address these recommendations.

Main findings

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

The school's results in 2010 in KS1 at level 2 and in KS2 at level 4 in English, mathematics and science are above local and national percentages and in line with the family average, while at the higher levels 3 and 5 they are better than all three comparators. There is a trend of sustained improvement in all three subjects, especially in each aspect of English, and in the core subject indicator (CSI).

The 2010 results in KS1 place the school below the mean of schools with a similar free school meals percentage in English, mathematics and the CSI and in the lowest 25% for science. In KS2 the results place the school above the mean for English and the CSI but below the average for mathematics and science. However, if those pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register are extracted, then the school is seen to perform in the best 25% of similar schools in all three subjects in both key stages. Performance in relation to gender fluctuates according to cohorts. There is no marked underachievement among any particular group of pupils.

Pupils enter the school with a range of abilities, but nearly all make good progress and reach expected levels in all three subjects in both key stages. In 2010 targets in all three core subjects were exceeded by around 40% of pupils in KS1 and by about a third in KS2, showing good value added progress.

Skills in literacy are good overall in every age group; nearly all pupils listen very well, speak clearly and learn to read and write fluently and accurately, although at times writing across the curriculum is limited. There are no significant differences in performance in oracy, reading and writing in both key stages.

Standards in information communications technology (ICT) are very good, especially among older and more able pupils; a wide range of electronic equipment is used confidently and competently.

Standards and progress in Welsh are uneven and relatively underdeveloped, although no families use the language naturally at home. Welsh is used by pupils mainly in school routines, but not regularly during most lessons or outside the classroom.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' wellbeing is a strong feature of the school. Nearly all pupils work well with others and show motivation and interest and very good attitudes to learning. They sustain concentration well and feel safe and happy in school. Through theme days, participation in a range of physical activities and choice of meals and snacks, many demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good overall and nearly all pupils show concern and consideration for others. They take on responsibilities willingly and

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demonstrate good thinking skills and tackle problems confidently. One pupil was temporarily excluded during the last year.

Attendance, at 95% in the previous year, is above the average for Wales and similar schools. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually.

All pupils have the opportunity to influence their life in school, for example through the well established school council.

The school has a wide range of links with the local community which help to develop pupils' social and communication skills and prepare them well for life and work outside school.

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

Overall, the school provides a range of interesting learning experiences for all pupils based on a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning ensures that teaching builds on existing knowledge and that pupils make good progress. The school has recently adopted a thematic approach to which pupils' interests and ideas contribute. The organisation of classes and groups takes account of gender and pupils' abilities.

In the Foundation Phase learning experiences do not consistently provide sufficient opportunities for learning outdoors and active child initiated learning or enough time for pupils to become fully engaged in their learning.

The learning of all pupils is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Special events, trips and visits by guests and members of the community enrich the curriculum and develop further pupils' learning.

The use of skills across the curriculum and development of the Welsh language are priorities in the school development/ improvement plan (SDIP). Skills progression is effectively embedded in teachers' planning and lesson procedures and its impact on learning is beginning to be carefully monitored. Welsh language provision, including the use of incidental Welsh by staff, however, is inconsistent and relatively underdeveloped.

Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is incorporated well into several areas of learning and the annual school Eisteddfod and visits to places of Welsh historical and cultural interest ensure pupils are both aware and proud of their culture and heritage.

Pupils are given a very good range of opportunities to learn about sustainability and global citizenship and they develop a good understanding of the part they and others play in society.

Teaching: Good

Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and most conduct lessons at a good pace to maintain pupils' interest. They have high expectations, develop excellent relationships with pupils and establish a very positive learning environment, using praise and encouragement, effective questioning techniques and a range of electronic equipment.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and most make provision for different ability levels, in particular to support those with learning difficulties and to challenge the more able.

Teachers plan lessons very thoroughly, which begin promptly with all necessary learning materials ready and available. However, there tends to be an over direction by teachers, which can restrict independent learning, problem solving, choice and decision making and at times results in an overuse of worksheets and tasks being unfinished.

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The school has comprehensive procedures for assessment, recording and reporting that meet statutory requirements and which are becoming embedded across the school. Different groups of pupils are effectively identified, tracked and targeted to raise their achievement.

Assessment for learning strategies, including self and peer assessment, are being developed across the school. Pupils know their literacy, numeracy and personal targets and these are regularly achieved. Assessment results are carefully analysed and used in future planning and target setting. The school is fully involved with standardisation and moderation procedures within the local cluster.

Work is marked regularly, but feedback to pupils varies and often does not sufficiently indicate the way forward.

Annual reports to parents are of high quality and provide detailed information of pupils' progress and attainment. Parents appreciate that the school provides three consultation evenings per year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a well-ordered and caring community with an inclusive ethos, which has a clear impact on pupils' achievement and wellbeing; this is a strong feature of the provision. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils achieve success. Adults and pupils show respect for each other.

The school is a safe and secure environment and effectively celebrates the benefits of healthy living, including the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise.

The provision for co-operative learning, problem solving and self-improvement is being developed. Values education is currently being promoted through the personal and social education programme (PSE).

Clear procedures for behaviour and discipline are in place and understood by pupils, who contribute to the development of school and class rules. There is an anti-bullying policy and staff expect and promote good behaviour. Registers are taken promptly and absences are correctly recorded.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies are well conducted and there are various international links.

Provision for pupils with ALN is very good; all receive effective targeted support which has a positive impact on their learning and progress. The ALN staff team is a very strong feature of the school and is very effective. Early intervention by teachers helps to diagnose learning difficulties quickly. Individual education plans (IEP) are rigorous and regularly monitored with pupils and parents. Links with specialist agencies and services are very good.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding and fully meets statutory requirements.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a distinct inclusive ethos and promotes tolerance for others and the prevention of any kind of oppressive behaviour; all necessary equal opportunities policies are in place. All pupils are treated fairly and with respect and have equal access to the curriculum and every aspect of school life.

The building and grounds, which are of a good quality and well maintained, provide a stimulating and welcoming learning environment for pupils and are used effectively. The number and size of classes are appropriate for the pupils on roll, although in some classrooms space is limited.

There are plenty of good quality resources.

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

Leadership: Good

The headteacher is a very enthusiastic and efficient leader, who is implementing many purposeful changes and initiatives to raise standards and the quality of the provision. She has a clear vision, leads by example and is creating a more distributed managerial system, based on a team approach.

The recently expanded senior management team and revised management structure are beginning to work well, so that all teachers and support staff are becoming more informed about the school's performance and strategic direction and are developing a greater ownership of the decision-making process.

The school's aims and targets are clearly identified in the SDIP, which is initially generated from a needs analysis exercise involving all staff. There are plans to involve both governors and the school council more in the future.

All teachers currently have some subject or aspect responsibility, but their oversight of the curriculum and pupil performance across the school is not fully effective. Subject co-ordination is being reformulated according to areas of learning, led by teams of staff.

Performance management arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective in improving learning and teaching. The number of team leaders has recently been increased due to the expansion of the SMT and training has been provided by the headteacher. All staff are included and targets are linked to the SDIP and pupil and professional needs.

Governors are supportive, well informed and meet their statutory obligations effectively. They have been fully involved in the recent managerial changes and appointments.

The school gives good attention to local and national priorities and has introduced a number of innovative programmes to raise standards in basic skills and pupils' wellbeing.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation procedures are robust and its report is based upon a comprehensive review of standards and provision by the whole staff and identifies clearly the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Self-evaluation analysis and on-going review together with the outcomes of performance management effectively inform priorities in the SDIP, which is a comprehensive and manageable working document.

The school is developing well as a professional learning community internally through its teaching teams. It also works closely with its family of schools on a number of projects and with a local special school and the main receiving secondary school.

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This has a positive impact particularly on transition arrangements and the provision for pupils with SEN.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners, employers and agencies. It takes a leading role with the local community and has strong links with organisations based in the surrounding estate; many local groups use the school premises.

Most parents are very supportive and appreciate the work of the school; as a result of recent questionnaires sent to them, systems for improving communication have been developed. Links with the LA are strong.

The school has effective links with teacher training institutions and the local cluster of schools and joint projects the school has participated in have been used as examples of good practice by the LA and the Welsh Assembly Government.

Resource management: Good

The school has a full complement of teachers. Support staff are well deployed and fulfil an important role in pupils' learning. Planning, preparation and assessment time is used appropriately and meets statutory requirements. Management time is also allowed for senior managers.

Training for teachers and support staff is well planned and takes account of school and professional priorities.

The school has a range of specialist facilities and is very well equipped with a variety of good quality resources; ICT hardware and software, in particular, is a strong feature of the provision and there are two well-equipped computer suites and two libraries.

The GB monitors the budget regularly and ensures that there is no overspend. Based on its relatively low income within the LA and the results it achieves, accompanied by its high quality of provision and facilities, the school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty-eight parents completed the questionnaire, of whom a minority added written comments, most of which praised the school, although there were a few individual criticisms. Most parents responded positively to every question. All agreed that their children are happy in school, settle in successfully and behave well. All also confirmed that they think the teaching is good, that their children are encouraged to be healthy and are safe at school and that there is a good range of activities. Nearly all reported that they are satisfied with the education the school provides and that the school is well run; they feel their children make good progress, are well prepared for secondary school, are treated fairly and with respect and are expected to do their best and to take on responsibilities. A very few stated that they were not sure they were kept well informed and had doubts about homework and any additional support offered. A few had concerns about approaching the school with suggestions or a problem and procedures for dealing with complaints

Responses to learner questionnaires

Sixty-two KS2 pupils completed the questionnaire. All are of the opinion that they have enough resources and equipment and nearly all confirmed they feel safe in school, they learn to be healthy and get regular exercise; they think they do well, know what to do and are helped to learn and to make progress. A few, mainly boys, expressed concerns about homework and bullying and a few, mainly girls, were unsure who to talk to if they were upset. Nearly a fifth of boys and girls were worried about other pupils disturbing them in lessons or in the playground.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Dr. P. David Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Mrs. Branwen Llewelyn Jones	Team Inspector
Mr. Alan Smith	Team Inspector
Mr. Ted Tipper	Lay Inspector
Ms. Joy Dando	Peer Inspector
Mrs. Margaret Lugg	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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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