



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

**Tonyrefail Primary School
Martin Crescent
Tonyrefail
Porth
CF39 8NT**

Date of inspection: December 2010

by

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



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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 2011: 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

Tonyrefail Primary School is a community school for boys and girls from three to 11 years of age. The school is situated in the small town of Tonyrefail on the edge of the Rhondda Valley. Most pupils come from the surrounding area, which is a mixture of rented and privately owned houses. Around 37% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals.

The school was built in the 1980s and was recently substantially extended and refurbished. There are 263 pupils on the school roll, which is an increase of 20% since the time of the last inspection in November 2004. No pupils come from Welsh speaking homes and almost all pupils come from homes where English is the first language. Around 27% of pupils have special educational needs (SEN), none of whom have statements of SEN.

The school is organised into ten classes. It provides a breakfast club for its pupils. The Genesis Community Day Nursery and a mother and toddlers playgroup, which cater for pre-school children, share part of the school accommodation.

The school very recently received stage 3 of the Healthy Schools Scheme, and holds the BECTA ICT award and the Eco Green Flag Award. The headteacher has been in post since 1996.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Tonyrefail Primary School is £2,984, which compares with a maximum of £9,064 and a minimum of £2,553 for primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The school has the 88th highest budget per pupil out of the 116 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Summary

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

Current performance

Many children make good progress in the early stages of the Foundation Phase and most pupils achieve good outcomes at the end of key stage 2 when compared to similar schools, local and national averages. Throughout the school, most pupils are well motivated and keen to learn.

While the school's performance has fluctuated over the past five years, there is a downward trend in pupils' performance in key stage 1. In addition, standards are lower in 2010 in both key stages, than five years ago. While standards in mathematics and science in key stage 1 are similar to family averages, standards in English in key stage 1 are lower, particularly in reading. Across both key stages, pupils' progress and achievement are uneven and their reading and writing skills are underdeveloped.

Prospects for improvement

There are good features in areas of the school's work, such as strategic partnerships and recent improvements in areas including assessment and pupils' information and communications technology (ICT) skills.

However, the school's prospects for improvement are adequate, because:

- self-evaluation is not accurate enough in identifying what needs to be improved; and
- leadership does not focus enough on setting high expectations of work across the school.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, Tonyrefail Primary School needs to:

- R1 raise standards of reading and writing in English, particularly in key stage 1;
- R2 use assessment information more to improve the match of pupils' work to their learning needs;
- R3 improve the quality of teaching;
- R4 ensure that self-evaluation provides an accurate account of standards and quality of provision; and
- R5 ensure that leaders consistently communicate high expectations of the work of pupils and staff.

What happens next?

Tonyrefail Primary School will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress in addressing the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

At the end of key stage 2, most pupils attain good standards compared with similar schools, national averages and their prior attainment. There is lower attainment in key stage 1, particularly in English, where the standard of pupils' reading and writing skills is below the family average. The school's performance has fluctuated over the past five years but there is a downward trend in pupils' performance in key stage 1. In addition, standards are lower in 2010 in both key stages, than five years ago.

Pupils' results at key stage 1 in 2010 are in the second quarter for all subjects and for the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum), when compared with results of schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Boys' performance is much lower than that of girls, particularly in English.

Pupils' results at key stage 2 in 2010 are in the first quarter for English and mathematics and the core subject indicator, and in the second quarter for science, when compared to results for similar schools. In English, the gap in performance of boys and girls is greater than family, local authority and national averages.

Pupils' ability on entry is lower than the local authority average. In the early stages of the Foundation Phase and at the end of key stage 2, pupils make good progress in their learning. Most pupils with additional learning needs and those in receipt of free school meals generally achieve well. However, across the school, there is unevenness in the progress of pupils' learning.

In both key stages, a majority of pupils' reading and writing skills are underdeveloped. In key stage 1, these pupils have limited reading skills and, in key stage 2, pupils do not read fluently enough and with expression. Across most areas of the school, pupils' extended writing is limited. Many pupils' handwriting skills are underdeveloped and spelling is often inaccurate. These weaknesses affect their progress across the curriculum.

Most pupils make good progress in gaining skills in the Welsh language. They generally achieve good standards in oracy. Pupils' reading and writing skills in Welsh are at an earlier stage of development.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils are well motivated, enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Most pupils are considerate and courteous and relate well to each other and adults.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy and active and feel safe and secure in school, having confidence in adults to support and care for them.

The school council is well established and pupil councillors undertake their role well. During break times, they make sure that all pupils have someone to play with and the oldest pupils work as play leaders with groups of younger children. While the school council is increasingly involved in decisions about school processes, such as contributing to school policies, generally across the school pupils' decision-making skills are underdeveloped. Pupils are involved in the wider community well through a range of worthwhile activities and projects.

The school's attendance rate of 91% is below the average for Wales and similar schools. While overall rates of attendance have shown little improvement over the past five years, the school has been successful in eliminating unauthorised absence over the past five terms. Most pupils arrive on time for school.

While the youngest pupils are beginning to be involved in deciding what and how they learn, overall, pupils' independent learning skills are underdeveloped. Pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve is developing but not fully influential in their learning.

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

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school provides a variety of learning experiences, which generally engage pupils' interest well. While planning informs individual programmes for pupils with specific needs, work does not always fully meet all pupils' learning needs. In particular, the work for more able pupils often does not stretch and challenge them enough.

The provision for the development of pupils' oracy, numeracy and particularly ICT skills is good. However, planning for pupils' reading and writing skills, including opportunities for extended writing, is generally insufficient to ensure that all pupils make suitable progress.

There is good provision for the Welsh language, particularly oracy skills, throughout the school. The school promotes the development of pupils' cultural and historical knowledge and understanding of Wales well.

There is a suitable range of extra-curricular activities that many pupils attend. Several of the activities are particularly appealing to boys and have been very successful in encouraging their positive attitudes to learning.

The school provides well for the development of pupils' understanding in areas such as education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Teaching: Adequate

Staff and pupils have good working relationships and treat each other with respect. There is a positive atmosphere in classes that encourages pupils to learn. Throughout the school, staff speak Welsh regularly and encourage pupils to develop their Welsh language skills.

In the minority of lessons where teaching is most effective:

- work is planned appropriately so that pupils build on their previous learning;
- there is a good lively pace to the lessons;
- questioning encourages pupils to develop their thinking skills; and
- group work is well planned and managed, enabling pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

Where teaching is less effective, work does not take enough account of pupils' abilities and progress. Activities are not always challenging for more able pupils and there is not enough emphasis on improving pupils' reading and writing skills. Usually, teachers explain the objectives of learning at the start of lessons but not all staff have high enough expectations of the quality of work that pupils produce. In some cases, teachers do not plan the work of support staff well enough and there are missed opportunities for them to contribute as much as they can to pupils' learning. In a few cases, staff do not pay enough attention to detail, for example in ensuring that they are good language models for pupils.

The school has comprehensive systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress and achievement. This work includes tracking pupils' attainment throughout the school and collating information about the skills that they have acquired. This information, however, does not always inform planning well enough to ensure that work fully meets all pupils' learning needs. Staff mark pupils' work regularly but do not always identify important mistakes or explain what pupils should do to improve.

In many areas of work, there are suitable opportunities for pupils to assess their own and others' learning. These opportunities are helping pupils to develop their understanding of how to improve their work.

Termly parents' meetings and annual written reports keep parents well informed about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Policies and procedures effectively promote pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a good range of initiatives which support pupils' health and wellbeing and encourage their involvement in the school and wider community. The school's nurture group is having a particularly beneficial impact on vulnerable pupils.

The school promotes good behaviour well and there are effective anti-bullying procedures. Most pupils and their parents or carers feel able to approach staff for support, advice and guidance when required.

The school has developed effective relationships with outside agencies to provide good-quality support for pupils and their parents. The induction arrangements for pupils starting school and the arrangements for pupils' transition to secondary school are thorough.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Staff identify pupils' learning needs at an early stage and provide them with appropriate support. There are good links with specialist external agencies. Well-written, child-friendly individual education plans and individual action plans are regularly evaluated and updated.

The school has appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding that fully meet requirements.

Learning environment: Good

The school is very welcoming to pupils, parents and visitors. It has a strong inclusive ethos where pupils are valued and receive equal access to all areas of the school's provision. A number of pupils have significant health needs and the school is successful in ensuring that they are fully included in school life.

The school has plenty of good-quality resources which staff and pupils use well. The accommodation is attractive and well maintained. The school grounds provide an extensive range of areas for play and learning.

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

Leadership: Adequate

The headteacher is strongly committed to the school and contributes positively to the supportive ethos where pupils and staff feel valued and respected. However, leadership does not consistently set high enough expectations or challenge for pupils and staff to deliver the best quality work.

There is a detailed analysis of a wide range of school performance data, which correctly identifies the importance of improving standards of literacy. While there is a good range of initiatives to improve pupils' reading and writing skills across the school, there is not enough focus upon ensuring that all efforts and activities lead to improvements in pupils' standards.

Staff roles and responsibilities are well defined and distributed leadership roles are developing throughout the school although they are not influential enough in raising standards. The recently appointed acting deputy is contributing effectively to improvements in the school, such as assessment for learning.

The governing body is well informed and carries out its duties well. Governors support the school and are aware of school priorities and pupils' performance. There are suitable committees and structures in place to oversee financial management, review policies and school procedures and ensure that statutory requirements are met.

School initiatives to meet local and national priorities are developing well. This year, the school gained the BECTA quality mark for ICT. There is good attention to pupils' wellbeing, the development of the Welsh language, implementing the Foundation Phase and curriculum arrangements in key stage 2.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school uses a wide range of procedures to evaluate its work. As part of its evaluation, the school takes good account of the views of parents, staff and pupils. The school is positive about external review and staff have responded well to the recommendations of the last Estyn inspection. For example, there is good progress in ensuring that pupils use Welsh language more extensively and in raising pupils' standards in using ICT.

While the self-evaluation process has helped to bring about improvements and identify suitable priorities, it is not always rigorous and accurate enough in judging how well work contributes to the standards pupils achieve. Senior managers carry out termly lesson observations of staff and scrutinise samples of pupils' work but their expectations of work are not always high enough. Sometimes, the evaluations focus too much on processes and do not take enough account of the effect on standards. Subject leaders take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating work in their subjects. While this work is developing, evaluations are sometimes too generous and do not identify shortcomings, such as in lesson planning and pupils' writing skills.

The school improvement plan accurately prioritises areas for development, including raising standards of literacy and improving assessment procedures. The well written, costed plan includes realistic timescales and success criteria to help measure the effectiveness of the work. However, staff do not use the plan well enough to bring about the required improvements.

Staff have good opportunities to increase their professional knowledge and skills through continuous professional development. While there are examples of collaboration and shared learning with other schools, overall, the school is not a strong learning community. There is not enough sharing of good practice or consideration of the impact of professional learning on pupils' learning within the school.

Partnership working: Good

The school works closely with parents. Parents feel welcome and have good opportunities to be involved in the school, for example as classroom helpers. There are good strategies to encourage parents to develop their skills, such as Family Learning programmes.

The school has effective partnerships with a range of outside agencies to meet the particular needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Recently, older pupils worked with the police on a worthwhile project that examined the nuisance of graffiti in the locality.

There are good partnerships with the independent day nursery and playgroup that operate on the school site. The helpful interaction between school and nursery staff and playgroup volunteers facilitates children's smooth transition to school and contributes well to effective community links.

There are strong links between the school and the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer. The school also works well with other secondary schools, such as in providing placements for students to gain work experience.

The school participates keenly in activities with the local authority cluster of schools. Staff have led curriculum developments for colleagues in these schools, such as the PE in School Sport (PESS) initiative. The school shares resources with others in the cluster, including the new ICT suite.

Resource management: Adequate

There are sufficient teaching staff who are appropriately deployed in the school. Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time. The management of this work is good. The deployment of support staff is not always fully effective in supporting pupils' learning needs.

There is efficient management of finances. Spending decisions match the priorities for school development. In particular, the purchase of a new reading scheme and the development of the library have been important developments in helping to raise standards of literacy.

Despite the good features in resource management, the school provides adequate value for money because of the uneven progress in pupils' learning in both key stages and lower standards in key stage 1, particularly in reading.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eleven parents attended the parents' meeting and fifty-six parents completed the questionnaires. Overall, these parents express a high degree of satisfaction with the school. Almost all parents report that their child feels safe in school and that staff are approachable if parents have concerns or questions. Most parents feel well informed about their children's achievements through regular meetings with teachers and helpful end of year reports.

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and six pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Inspectors also talked to individuals and representative groups of pupils across the school. Overall, pupils say that they are happy, enjoy school and know whom they can talk to if they are worried or upset. They feel safe and believe that staff treat them equally and with respect. Pupils think that the school provides plenty of opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles and that they have enough equipment, including computers, to do their work.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Wendy Young	Reporting Inspector
Rosemary Lait	Team Inspector
Farrukh Khan	Team Inspector
Jenny Rathbone	Lay Inspector
Katherine Thomas	Peer Inspector
Sonia Sokolowski (Headteacher)	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 Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

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