



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

**Builth Wells CP School,
Hospital Road,
Builth Wells,
Powys
LD2 3GA**

Date of inspection: July 2011

by

Dr David Gareth Evans

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

Builth County Primary School is a large, bilingual, dual-stream school which serves the town of Builth Wells and the surrounding area. Although the vast majority of pupils live locally, a significant minority, particularly those desiring a Welsh-medium education, travel to attend the school.

The school serves an area described as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is much lower than the Wales and local averages.

The school caters for pupils aged 3-11 years. There are 323 full-time pupils on roll, including 41 nursery children. Numbers have risen considerably over the last few years and the school is currently oversubscribed.

The school is organised into 13 classes, five of which are Welsh-medium and eight English-medium. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils have opted to be taught through the medium of Welsh.

Builth Wells is mainly an English-speaking area and only five per cent of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Five pupils receive support for English as an additional language. No one is 'looked after' by the local authority.

There are fourteen full-time, three part-time teachers and fourteen classroom support staff. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

There is an Area Learning Support Class (ALSC) in the school which caters for pupils with special educational needs from a wide catchment area. In total, 17 per cent of pupils in the school have special educational needs, a figure which is just below the national average. One pupil has a statement of educational needs.

The school was last inspected in May 2005.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Builth Wells County Primary School is £3,151, which compares with a maximum of £11,812 and a minimum of £2,891 for primary schools in Powys. The school has the 85th highest budget per pupil out of the 101 primary schools in Powys.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- nearly all pupils make good progress during their period in school;
- in general, the quality of teaching throughout the school is good;
- a good range of exciting learning experiences are provided;
- there is an inclusive school ethos; and
- pupils' health and wellbeing are promoted well and they feel happy and safe in the school.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- a committed headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff share the same vision and work together well to realise their aspirations;
- all stakeholders contribute to the effective self-evaluation process, which is a solid foundation for the school development plans; and
- there is an enthusiastic, supportive and effective governing body that fulfils its duties conscientiously.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 raise the standard of pupils' writing in English across the curriculum;

R2 accelerate pupils' progress in Welsh second language in key stage 2; and

R3 ensure that the best teaching practices are disseminated throughout the school.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Children's skill levels when they start in the school vary considerably, with a minority having special educational needs. However, most achieve the outcomes expected of their age by the end of the Foundation Phase. This is particularly true of their language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh when considering that most pupils come from non-Welsh-speaking homes.

In the English stream, nearly all pupils across the school listen attentively and speak with confidence, both with other pupils and adults. Most make good progress in their reading and comprehension skills by the end of key stage 2. Standards in writing in both key stages are generally good, but pupils do not consistently produce effective pieces of extended and imaginative writing.

Pupils' attitudes to Wales and learning Welsh are positive. Most pupils in the Welsh stream develop their communication skills well. Their reading skills are good and they produce stimulating examples of extended writing for different purposes. Pupils' understanding of Welsh second language develops well in the Foundation Phase, but in key stage 2 pupils' oracy skills are less well developed.

Most pupils with special educational needs and those in the ALSC class make good progress and they benefit significantly from being integrated consistently into the main stream. Over the last two years key stage 2 pupils receiving free school meals also perform well.

Pupils' performance in the core subject indicator (CSI), the expected level in English, mathematics and science, has improved over the last two years in key stage 1 and is now above national and local, but below the family, averages. In key stage 2, the CSI has been above national, local and family averages for three of the last four years.

In teacher assessments in 2010, when pupils from the ALSC class are discounted, all pupils in key stage 1 attained the CSI and nearly all did so in key stage 2. This puts the school in the second quartile when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that, when pupils in the ALSC class are discounted, the school has performed well in previous years.

Since 2007, the percentage of pupils attaining above the expected levels at the end of both key stages has varied considerably from year to year. Overall, boys do not attain as well as girls, particularly in key stage 2. However, in 2010 boys performed far better than girls in key stage 1.

Wellbeing: Good

The school is an inclusive, safe, happy and caring community and pupils' enjoyment and their active participation in the life of the school are strong features

Most pupils have a strong awareness that eating healthily and keeping fit contribute to a healthy body and mind. They also show good knowledge and understanding of rules associated with wellbeing and safety, and the influences that can affect a healthy life.

Most pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. They take enthusiastic and effective responsibility for their own learning, and support each other very well during lessons and activities.

Attendance during the year averages 94%, and this is above national averages. Punctuality when arriving at the school and in lessons is generally good.

Most pupils behave well; they are polite, welcoming and very keen to discuss their school's virtues. Most show great respect towards each other. They are very proud of their school and of the close community within the school. There has been one fixed-term exclusion of five days in the last four years.

The school council is effective and members' responsibilities are clear. They are hard-working and confident that many of the council's recommendations are considered and implemented.

Pupils benefit from regular visits to the local community, local businesses and shops as part of their work in a number of curricular areas.

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

A wide range of learning experiences is carefully planned to stimulate pupils' interest well. Good practice in the Foundation Phase provides a firm foundation for developing independent learners. Learning experiences are enriched further through a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Good emphasis is placed on the promotion of skills in lessons and opportunities are provided in almost every class for pupils to identify which key skills are being used. However, on occasion, the work is not sufficiently challenging to extend pupils' Welsh second language skills in key stage 2.

The school successfully promotes the Welsh dimension, for example, with visits to the Urdd centre at Llangrannog and Llancaiach Fawr. There is an annual school Eisteddfod and successful promotion of Welsh artists and writers, such as Kyffin Williams and Angharad Tomos.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is a prominent feature of the school. Effective use is made of the school's grounds to grow a variety of

vegetables and pupils talk enthusiastically about these projects, which have been promoted through effective partnerships with parents, the community and external agencies. The school operates in a sustainable manner and, under the leadership of an active Eco Committee, pupils' commitment to these measures is strong. Pupils are familiar with the circumstances, customs and traditions of different countries, such as Eritrea, Ethiopia and New Zealand. They show empathy towards good causes in the third world by collecting money regularly.

Teaching: Good

Most teachers successfully use a range of stimulating teaching methods and a variety of resources to engage and challenge pupils in their learning. In the best lessons, teachers plan effectively, share learning objectives well and deliver sessions in a lively and clear manner. Open questioning is also used effectively to develop pupils' thinking skills. In the few lessons where teaching is not as effective, this is often due to a lack of pace and challenge and work does not fully meet the learning needs of all pupils.

In the best lessons, teachers use learning assistants well to support pupils, but this practice is inconsistent. A few learning assistants have expertise in aspects of literacy and numeracy and this has a positive effect on the learning experiences of pupils with special educational needs.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, often giving constructive comments for improvement. The school makes good use of teacher assessments to track pupils' progress and to target individuals and groups of pupils for additional support. Systems for moderating teachers' assessments are well developed at year group, key stage and whole-school level, ensuring that judgments are secure. Assessment for learning strategies are beginning to have a positive influence on standards.

Reports to parents contain the appropriate information. Individual pupil targets focus on areas for further improvement and encourage them to improve their own performance.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements in place to support pupils' health and wellbeing. Pupils are encouraged to express opinions, to contribute effectively to developments in the school and to be associated with activities in the local community. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Personal and Social Education is carefully planned and plays an important part in the curriculum.

A whole-school approach to positive behaviour management provides all pupils with a good structure to support moral development. Pupils are involved in making class rules and the school rules are well understood. Good use is made of specialist services and links with specialist agencies are a strong feature of the school. The headteacher has a pro-active approach to promoting attendance and punctuality and the school's procedures are very thorough.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. These are known to all members of staff and pupils know to whom to turn to in an emergency.

Support for pupils with special educational needs is one of the school's strengths. Policies and procedures are clear, helpful and focus on all pupils as individuals. Good support is provided for those pupils with English as an additional language and for those in the ALSC. Although the school identifies more able and talented pupils, provision for them is at an early stage of development.

Learning environment: Good

There is a strong ethos within the school that effectively promotes a sense of belonging, mutual respect and equality. The school encourages all pupils to be fully involved in school life. Differences are valued and celebrated and pupils enjoy good opportunities to take responsibility.

The school is an inclusive community where each pupil is treated as an individual and pupils' needs are clearly identified and addressed. Equality of opportunity is actively promoted throughout the school and nearly all pupils report that oppressive behaviour is addressed promptly and effectively.

The school has a good range of high quality resources that are used very well. The indoor accommodation has been developed in a creative, imaginative way. The accommodation meets the needs of pupils well and the high standard of classroom displays helps create an enriched learning environment. Nearly all pupils are appreciative of the quality and sufficiency of learning resources, such as books, equipment and the new computer suite.

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

The school has a clear sense of direction and a culture that strives for improvement. The headteacher and senior management team provide effective leadership and have high expectations. Staff meetings and well-planned whole-school training sessions focus successfully on the school's priorities for development. These activities help staff to develop a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the school's strategies and plans.

Data is analysed well and used effectively to monitor performance across the school. Performance management procedures are in place for the teaching staff. Targets for individual members of staff relate directly to school improvement priorities and individual needs. These procedures support the effective delivery of the school's development plans.

The governing body has a good understanding of its role and supports the school as a critical friend. It has a good understanding of how the school performs in comparison with similar schools. It analyses relevant data appropriately and is aware of the issues arising from them. The school has appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with complaints and these are clearly published in school documentation.

School development planning takes good account of local and national priorities and incorporates them in appropriate strategies. For example, staff training on the Foundation Phase has resulted in more effective preparation and provision for receiving children from the infant school. The principles of the School Effectiveness Framework are a sound feature of the school's improvement priorities.

Improving quality: Good

The school has well-established self-evaluation procedures that focus successfully on pupils' standards. These procedures include thorough analysis of performance data, monitoring of the school's provision and reviewing all aspects of the school's work. All members of staff contribute effectively to these arrangements. The views of pupils, parents and governors are taken into account and the school accurately assesses its strengths and weaknesses.

Improvement plans include a broad range of actions and identify members of staff with responsibility for their delivery. They also include clear success criteria and well-defined timescales for evaluation and completion. In general, the school has made good progress in implementing the recommendations of the previous inspection.

The school is developing into a strong learning community with a vibrant culture of collaboration among staff, who reflect upon and evaluate their own practice regularly. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing. Staff collaborate extensively with other local schools in the cluster and are involved in four professional learning communities, which successfully impact on teaching and learning.

Partnership working: Good

The school has an extensive range of partnerships with the local community and the local family of schools. Transition arrangements between the school and the local comprehensive are good. Links with the local Cylch Meithrin are well established and staff and children make regular visits to the school. The partnership with parents is strong and parents are supportive of all the activities that are provided. They state that they receive regular information about their children's progress, for example, through letters and the school's website. Visitors from the community regularly contribute to school life and pupils make many visits to places of interest.

Consistency in moderation and standards is maintained across the school by joint moderation of pupils' work each academic year. The cluster of schools has effective procedures for accurately moderating and standardising pupils' work in the National Curriculum core subjects.

Resource management: Good

Resources allocated to the school are managed well by leaders and managers and ensure appropriate staffing arrangements to teach the curriculum effectively. There is a good match between the school's priorities and decisions on expenditure. There are suitable arrangements in place for appraisal and performance management and

effective use is made of planning, preparation and assessment time available to teachers.

The governing body keeps a watchful eye on the budget and makes sensible decisions in terms of staffing and class sizes.

Because of the generally effective teaching, which promotes pupils' standards and wellbeing successfully, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Seventy-five parents completed the questionnaire and nearly all are very satisfied with the school. Almost everyone stated that their children had received support to settle well when they started school and all confirm that their children feel safe there. Nearly all consider that the teaching is good, that staff expect their children to work hard and that they encourage their children to be healthy and to exercise regularly. Most believe that homework is appropriate and that they receive regular information about their children's progress. Nearly all state that the school is helping their children mature and take responsibility and that the school provides them with appropriate, additional support in relation to any specific individual need. Most feel that they understand the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints; that there is a good variety of activities, including trips or visits; and nearly all comment that the school is run well.

Many feel that their children are prepared well for moving on to the next school. Nearly all are happy to approach the school to ask questions, make suggestions or identify problems; and they believe that staff treat every child fairly and with respect. Nearly all state that their children are making good progress.

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and fifty-eight pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and the team spoke to other pupils during the inspection. All state that they feel safe at school. Nearly all state that the school deals well with bullying and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. Nearly all know whom they can speak to if they are worried or if they are finding the work hard, and that there are plenty of resources available at the school. Nearly all of the pupils think that the teachers and the other adults help them to learn and make progress and most of them also feel that they are doing well at school. A third of the pupils consider that other children's behaviour disrupts their ability to do their work and a few do not believe that nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Dr David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Mrs Deris Williams	Lay Inspector
Mrs Helen Rowe	Peer Inspector
Mr Eurig Towns	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