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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ogmore Vale Primary School
Aber Road
Bridgend
CF32 7AJ**

Date of inspection: January 2011

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.

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Context

Ogmore Vale Primary School has 359 pupils aged three to 11 years of age. It is situated in the village of Ogmore Vale in the county borough of Bridgend.

The school serves the residential area of Ogmore Vale and the surrounding area. In general, the area is neither economically advantaged nor disadvantaged, but 24% of pupils live in a Communities First area which is deemed the tenth most deprived area in Wales on the Child Poverty scale for health. Four pupils are looked after by a local authority. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the all-Wales and local authority averages. There is no pre-school nursery provision in the school's catchment area.

Around 29% of pupils have special educational needs (SEN). This percentage is higher than both local authority and Wales averages. There are two SEN classes; one is an observation class and the other caters for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, including pupils from outside the school's catchment area. There are 14 other classes, including one nursery.

There are no pupils who speak Welsh as a first language. Four per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds but none receives teaching in English as an additional language.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ogmore Vale Primary is £3,242, which compares with a maximum of £4,826 and a minimum of £2,758 for primary schools in Bridgend. The school has the 22nd highest budget per pupil out of the 52 primary schools in Bridgend.

Summary

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

Current performance

Current performance is judged as adequate because:

- nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to their work;
- many pupils make clear and appropriate progress in their communication skills;
- by the end of key stage 2, many pupils write well and extensively as part of their inquiry work; and
- the school has good provision for learning experiences

However, the school needs to bear in mind the following issues requiring improvement:

- the school's performance at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 is below that of similar schools and of those within the family of schools;
- new systems and processes have not yet had time to impact fully on provision;
- there are too many inconsistencies in teaching and classroom practice; and
- the school has not made enough progress in planning and implementing the teaching of transferrable skills, such as communication, numeracy and thinking skills, across the curriculum.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement at the school are good because:

- the school's target-setting processes are strong and focus well on raising standards;
- the revised tracking system enables the school to identify underperformance at an early stage and to take action to address it; and
- there are comprehensive and manageable arrangements in place to bring about a clearer focus by leaders on improving standards.

Recommendations

To improve, the school needs to:

R1 raise standards in English, mathematics and science;

R2 ensure progression in the development of skills across the curriculum;

R3 ensure consistency in teaching and classroom practice;

R4 focus the work of the senior management team on the improvement of standards; and

R5 improve attendance.

What happens next?

The school will prepare an action plan to set out how it will take forward Estyn's recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Standards of achievement throughout the school vary too much. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils achieve well, but achievement and improvement of standards are often uneven in lessons and over a period of time.

Many pupils make clear and appropriate progress in their communication skills. Most pupils read at an appropriate level for their age and ability and speak clearly and confidently with other pupils and with adults. Throughout the school, progress in writing is inconsistent but, by the end of key stage 2, many pupils write well and extensively in a variety of forms and across a range of subjects as part of their inquiry work. The more able pupils produce work of a very high standard.

Many pupils throughout the school can speak, read and write Welsh at an appropriate level in formal classroom situations but generally lack confidence to use Welsh orally in more informal settings.

In 2010, performance at the end of key stage 1 was below family of schools, local authority and Wales averages. There has been a downward trend for the past two years, following two years of achieving close to the average levels for the family of schools, local authority and Wales.

Compared to schools of a similar nature, based on entitlement to free school meals, school performance in key stage 1 is in the lowest 25% of that for schools for all subjects in 2010. In 2008 and 2009, performance was in the lower 50% of that for similar schools, the exception being performance in the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) where it was in the higher 50% in 2008.

In 2010, performance at the end of key stage 2 was also below that of the family of schools, the local authority and Wales. Performance in the previous three years was inconsistent, with a significant drop in performance in all core subjects in 2008. Performance in 2009 was close to family, local authority and Wales averages.

The performance for 2010 is in the lowest 25% of that for similar schools in English, science and the core subject indicator, and in the lower 50% in mathematics.

The school has one observation class in key stage 1 and a class for pupils with moderate learning difficulties in key stage 2. When these pupils are not included in performance analysis, the school compares more favourably, particularly in key stage 2. However, performance remains below expectations within the family of schools, and compared with all-Wales and local authority levels.

Over recent years, in both key stages, girls generally perform better than boys, but to varying degrees year on year. In 2010, girls performed better than boys in both key

stages, with the gender gap in key stage 1 being greater than at key stage 2. Boys' performance levels were lower than those of their peers when compared to family, local authority and all-Wales averages at key stage 2, while girls' performance was fairly close to those averages.

Pupils with additional learning needs in the observation class at key stage 1, those with moderate learning difficulties at key stage 2, and those on the ALN register all make appropriate progress and achieve well according to their ability.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve on a par with other pupils.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to their work. They listen intently and concentrate effectively on their tasks, and discuss their activities with enthusiasm and understanding. Many pupils co-operate well as pairs or groups and make confident contributions in classroom discussions. They respect each other's point of view and can justify decisions and opinions.

Attendance, at 92.3% in 2010, is just below the average for the local authority and Wales. Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils are helpful and respectful of each other and of the adults at the school.

Pupils speak knowledgeably and positively about the importance of healthy eating, and the fruit tuck shop run by the school council enables pupils to make healthy choices. All pupils feel safe in school and are keen to engage in the varied and extensive range of sporting opportunities on offer such as golf, judo, netball and basketball.

The school council allows pupils to assume positions of responsibility and it is a valued part of the school. Members of the council take part in decisions on how to spend money raised as a result of their fundraising efforts, for example on playground equipment. Pupils play an active and useful role in the work of the learners' forum as part of the school's self-evaluation process.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The school has good provision for learning experiences. Teachers plan a comprehensive and engaging programme of learning activities that fully addresses the demands of the National Curriculum.

The recent development of involving support staff in the planning process is proving beneficial. The comprehensive programme of inquiries and research undertaken by pupils ensures the imaginative delivery of a number of subjects. Teachers have collaborated effectively to ensure the coverage of the range of each subject and have mapped out thoroughly a progression of subject-specific skills.

The provision for general learning skills is not clearly identified in subject planning. Planning to meet the needs of the full range of abilities is not yet consistent in all classes. Teachers enhance the provision by organising an extensive programme of visits, special events and links with the community.

The school makes good provision to enable pupils to have an understanding of their place and responsibilities in the world. The well-established school council, the Eco Council and links with Uganda contribute positively to the provision. Extra-curricular activities enrich school life well.

Almost all teachers and classroom support staff use incidental Welsh at an appropriate level in the daily routine of school life, and encourage pupils to respond. The school addresses the needs of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig well.

Teaching: Good

In general, the quality of teaching is good. Many teachers have comprehensive current subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils.

In the majority of classes where teaching is most effective, teachers share clear lesson objectives and success criteria with their pupils, and use an extensive range of effective teaching approaches and techniques. All teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) successfully, and many teachers use digital media innovatively to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers organise learning support assistants carefully and they contribute positively to the teaching provision.

Teachers always provide positive oral and written feedback to pupils. Marking, in most cases, is formative and clearly indicates a way forward. Nearly all teachers use assessment for learning strategies effectively. In the best practice, pupils reflect upon what they have learned and know what to do to improve their learning.

The school has comprehensive arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The school keeps parents well informed of their child's progress, achievements and attitudes. The annual report to parents provides useful and detailed information.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides a happy and caring environment where pupils develop good attitudes to health and wellbeing. Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for children to reflect upon their own beliefs, promote important shared values, and sensitively enable the pupils to work respectfully with one another. The school makes good provision for pupils to learn an appreciation of the environment and culture in which they live.

The policy and arrangements for supporting pupils with additional learning needs are comprehensive. Thorough assessments enable early identification of needs. Detailed monitoring of individual education plans ensures that these pupils' needs are met effectively throughout the school. The arrangements for language support are strong and are reviewed regularly and adapted appropriately.

The school has effective arrangements in place with key agencies to support individual pupils' needs effectively.

Pupils receive instruction from the police service on safety issues, including road safety and internet safety. For example, pupils had the opportunity to identify safe routes to school and to monitor traffic speeds on roads approaching the school.

The school has an appropriate policy and clear procedures for safeguarding. All staff have received training and are aware of their responsibilities.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a welcoming and caring ethos and promotes equality and social diversity well. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum, and the school operates effective inclusion procedures that allow pupils to move between specialist and mainstream classes according to their needs. This develops pupils' social skills well and challenges stereotypes appropriately.

The curriculum promotes cultural diversity and respect for others well. A link with a school in Uganda raises pupils' awareness of diversity and helps them to develop values of care and empathy. Pupils learn the meaning of consideration and fair-play through cross-curricular work and participation in assemblies that encourage pupils to reflect on values.

The school has worked with the local history society to develop an 'Ogmore Archive' in the school. This resource roots the school well in its local environment and promotes local values effectively.

The school building, outdoor learning areas and grounds are of a high standard and are very well maintained. The school provides a stimulating learning environment that caters well for all pupils and is well equipped to deliver the curriculum. Staff and pupils make good use of multi-functional spaces throughout the school and all classrooms provide a very pleasant working environment. There are attractive displays of pupils' work in all classrooms.

Pupils in the Foundation Phase benefit from indoor and outdoor learning areas that contribute well to their learning. The school generally is developing the grounds effectively as a learning resource.

The school has good quality resources that are well matched to pupils' learning needs. It has a well-resourced library, and pupils also make extensive use of the library in the Ogmore Valley Life Centre. The needs of disabled pupils and parents are considered well in the strategic planning of resources.

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

The recently restructured senior leadership team supports and challenges the headteacher in his aim to create an innovative curriculum that achieves higher

standards of achievement for pupils. Roles within the senior management team are clearly defined and middle leaders work extremely hard to fulfil their responsibilities. Through informal systems, senior and middle leaders promote the dissemination of good practice. However, these systems have not yet had time to impact fully on achieving greater consistency of standards or provision for all learners.

Teachers' performance targets link well to priorities in the school development plan. Appropriate performance management systems are in place for all staff. Job descriptions suitably match specific positions within the school.

The school generally responds well to national priorities. Roles within the senior leadership align with the School Effectiveness Framework, as do targets within the school development plan. The skilful implementation of the Foundation Phase has led to improved standards of wellbeing and independence amongst pupils and is beginning to impact on standards of achievement. However, the school has made inconsistent progress in implementing the use of general learning skills across the curriculum.

Many governors understand their roles and challenge the school effectively. Governors understand the school's data and ask challenging questions regarding pupils' standards. They know the school's priorities well, and are aware of its self-evaluation processes. However, governors are not yet involved enough in self-evaluation or in setting the strategic direction of the school.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders and middle managers have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They generally make good use of a range of monitoring activities to form judgements on standards and provision. However, not all activities focus enough on the impact of initiatives on pupils' standards of achievement.

The recent introduction of a detailed assessment system enables the effective tracking of all pupils' progress. Using the system, teachers can identify and target underperforming pupils appropriately. However, it is too early for there to be any significant impact on the achievement of pupils.

The school takes the views of parents and pupils seriously and feeds their comments into the self-evaluation process. For example, a recent review of both the homework and behaviour policies was a result of parental responses to a questionnaire. The school council and the recently established Learners' Forum provide valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute to the self-evaluation process.

The process of self-evaluation appropriately informs the targets in the school development plan. The school appropriately prioritises areas for improvement and is currently implementing sound strategies to bring about the desired results. Through monitoring, senior and middle leaders are clear that the inquiry-based curriculum has positively impacted on pupils' standards of wellbeing and independence. Their priority now is to ensure teacher consistency in using this approach, to formalise the progression of skills within the inquiry-based curriculum and to improve standards in

reading and writing by making the delivery of these areas as exciting and innovative as inquiry-led lessons. There are comprehensive and manageable structures in place to bring about these improvements.

Progress in addressing recommendations since the last inspection has been uneven. Provision and standards of Welsh second language have much improved. Pupils are writing for a wider range of purposes, although opportunities to write across the curriculum are limited. Schemes of work have been developed in all subject areas. Through planned opportunities, subject leaders are now involved in regular monitoring activities, and the role of the subject leader has developed well.

All staff benefit from continuing professional development which has impacted positively on teachers' confidence in teaching Welsh as a second language and their knowledge of how to implement an inquiry-based curriculum. All staff have a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes a professional learning community. Through regular team meetings, teachers and other staff informally share professional knowledge. Although in their early stages, formal professional learning partnerships within the school have already resulted in changes to classroom practice.

Partnership working: Good

Pupils benefit from strong links with a wide range of agencies that share information and develop positive strategies to tackle issues of disadvantage and to support pupils' wellbeing.

The collaboration with the adjacent Life Centre is exceptionally strong and extends the range of sporting facilities and opportunities open to pupils. Pupils can participate in a broad range of sports during and after school hours, such as golf, judo, football, netball and cross-country running. The strong partnership has a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and health.

Parents are kept well informed about school life through regular newsletters and make valuable contributions to fundraising, including by running a well-established fruit and vegetable co-operative.

The school works well with its cluster schools, and transition plans have an appropriate focus on teaching, learning and wellbeing. The school has worked positively and productively with a range of partners to develop and to deliver the curriculum. The resulting 'programmes of inquiry' are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Resource management: Adequate

The school deploys teaching and support staff appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers and middle leaders make effective use of planning, preparation and assessment time.

The school has managed its budget well during a time of falling pupil numbers. It has prioritised its spending and usually links its priorities to activities that will have the

most impact on raising pupils' standards of achievement. The school has used additional funding, received through donations, to improve outdoor provision. The equipment and apparatus purchased benefits the physical and emotional development of all pupils. The use of shared resources with the Life Centre contributes well to enhancing pupils' standards of wellbeing.

There are no unsatisfactory standards or inadequate aspects to provision. However, because standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are below family and similar school averages and there are inconsistencies in both standards of achievement and provision, the school is judged to offer adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred pupils in key stage 2 responded to the pupil questionnaire and responses to almost all questions were very positive. All pupils feel that they are safe in school, and almost all of them feel that the school deals well with any bullying. Every pupil feels that they are doing well at school, and that the teachers and other adults help them to make progress. Almost all know what to do and whom to ask if work is difficult. Similarly, almost all pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. They feel that the school provides them with lots of opportunities to get regular exercise and believe that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. Almost all pupils believe that there are enough equipment, books and computers in school and that their homework helps them to understand and improve their school work. A majority of pupils believe that other children behave well so that they can do their work, and that children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Responses to parents' questionnaires

Fifteen questionnaires were completed and returned to Estyn. These show that most parents are generally satisfied with the school, and believe that it is well run. Parents indicate that their children are safe at school, and that the children are helped to settle in well when they first start. They believe that the school helps their children to become more mature and to take on responsibility, and that pupils at the school behave well. Almost all parents feel that their children like school and that staff expect their children to work hard. They also believe that the school encourages its pupils to be healthy and to take regular exercise. Most parents feel that teaching is good and that their children are making appropriate progress. In their opinion, there is a good variety of activities, including trips and visits, staff at the school treat children fairly and with respect, and they receive suitable support when there are particular needs. Most parents feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress and are comfortable about approaching the school with issues or questions for discussion. Many stated that they understood the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. Most parents believe that the homework given to their children builds on the learning in classrooms, and that the children were well prepared for moving forward to secondary education.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Penny Lewis	Team Inspector
Liz Miles	Team Inspector
Deirdre Mary Emberson	Lay Inspector
Anthony Stevenson	Peer Inspector
Mr P Booth (Head)	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