



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

**Cwm Primary School
Canning Street
Cwm
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 6RD**

Date of inspection: October 2012

by

**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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Cwm Primary School is in Cwm, Ebbw Vale, in the Blaenau Gwent local authority. The school provides education for boys and girls from the age of three to 11 years. The number of pupils on roll is 208, including 34 of nursery age. The school admits children into the nursery in the term after their third birthday. There are nine classes, including the nursery. The area the school serves is economically disadvantaged and in a Communities First Area. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the all-Wales average. The school identifies 21% of pupils as having additional learning needs, including a very few who have a statement of special educational needs. The home language of virtually all pupils is English. No pupils have Welsh as a mother tongue. Less than 2% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The school was last inspected in November 2006. The present headteacher was appointed in May 2011, after 16 months as acting headteacher. The deputy head teacher was appointed in January 2012.

The individual school budget per pupil for Cwm Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,966 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Blaenau Gwent is £5,681 and the minimum is £3,285. Cwm Primary School is 19th out of the 27 primary schools in Blaenau Gwent in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of Cwm Primary School is good because:

- pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and feel their voice is listened to;
- relationships across the school are very good;
- behaviour is good;
- there are very good links with parents;
- the learning environment is inclusive and caring;
- opportunities for pupils to learn about sustainability are well developed; and
- intervention strategies are having a very positive impact on raising pupils' standards in reading and writing.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement in Cwm Primary School are good because:

- the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are successful in developing a clear, shared vision and direction for the school;
- leaders and managers have motivated staff so that they all demonstrate an enthusiastic commitment to the process of school improvement;
- data is used very effectively to target pupils in need of additional support; and
- the school has developed a range of strong partnerships, which impact positively on the standards that pupils achieve and their levels of wellbeing.

Recommendations

- R1 Continue to raise standards in reading throughout the school and extend pupils' writing skills across the curriculum in the Foundation Phase;
- R2 improve pupils' use of numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum;
- R3 ensure that lessons are planned and delivered to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able; and
- R4 develop a more evaluative monitoring system, which focuses on the quality of teaching and learning

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many pupils start from a below average baseline but most make good progress during their time in school. Speaking and listening skills across the school are good. The majority of pupils speak confidently and listen carefully in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum. They respond very well to teachers' questioning and can recall previous learning accurately. By comparison, their numeracy and information and communication technology skills are less well developed.

Older pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to extend their problem-solving abilities effectively. They organise their work logically and draw conclusions when, for example, they carry out investigations in mathematics. Most pupils in key stage 2 also identify the skills they will need to complete a task accurately and are developing well as independent learners. Many pupils have developed good thinking skills and this is having a positive impact on their learning and the standards they achieve.

Over the last 18 months, new support programmes have helped to improve the reading skills of many pupils. Most pupils apply their phonic knowledge with increasing confidence but many still read at a level below their chronological age. Older pupils' higher order reading skills, such as, skimming and scanning, are at an early stage of development. Many pupils read and write well given their age and ability.

Most pupils make good progress in writing in language lessons. In the Foundation Phase, pupils are very enthusiastic about writing. They are beginning to write more independently, but for a limited range of purposes. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils write for a variety of different audiences effectively, but more able pupils are not always confident when planning and redrafting their writing to produce extended pieces.

Many pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in line with their abilities when they follow carefully targeted additional support programmes for literacy and numeracy.

Standards in Welsh second language throughout the school are good. Pupils' attitudes to their Welsh heritage and learning Welsh are positive. Nearly all pupils are confident singing Welsh songs and holding simple conversations. They often use their Welsh language skills spontaneously.

Due to the small numbers of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments need to be treated with care. One pupil's results can have a significant impact on the school's overall performance.

In 2012, pupils' performance at the end of the Foundation Phase was above family averages for language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development, but below for personal and social development. When compared to

schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school was in the upper 50% in relation to language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development, but in the lower 50% for personal and social development. The performance of more able pupils was below family averages in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development but above the family average for personal and social development.

In key stage 2, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science has varied considerably over the last four years. Performance has been above family averages consistently except for a dip in 2011. When compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, results for 2012 place the school in the upper 50% for mathematics but in the lower 50% for English and science. The results of more able pupils have also varied considerably over time. However, in 2012, pupils' performance at the higher level (level 5) in all three subjects was above the family and similar schools averages.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils feel safe in the school and know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful towards each other and adults. Behaviour around the school and in the playgrounds is good. The introduction of 'Golden Time' has had a positive impact on overall behaviour.

Nearly all pupils have a very clear understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the value of good hygiene, nutrition and regular exercise.

Attendance, at just over 94%, is well above of the average for similar schools and has shown a recent steady increase. Pupils are responding positively to the range of measures the school has put in place to encourage good attendance. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

The school council is actively involved in decision-making and has made a valued contribution to the lunchtime provision through its campaign to introduce a salad bar. Pupils are aware of the needs of others within the wider community and have helped many local and national charities.

Pupils are beginning to develop their ability to improve their own learning, work with others and to develop their thinking skills. This helps them move on to the next stage of their learning.

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

Overall, the planning of learning experiences is successful in covering the requirements of both the Foundation Phase and the National Curriculum. Through a mix of local authority and published schemes the curriculum builds systematically on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding.

A good range of intervention programmes is used well to raise the standards of identified pupils. However, planning for the application of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum is not yet fully embedded. As a result, more able pupils are not always challenged.

The promotion of Welsh heritage and culture is a positive feature of the school.

Pupils' awareness is developed effectively through lessons and celebrations and the majority of staff model the language well.

Pupils receive a good education for sustainable development and global citizenship, both in the classroom and through extra-curricular activities. Members of the eco committee demonstrate a keen awareness of current environmental challenges and how to address them. The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness of the wider world, through assemblies and topic work.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers establish good working relationships with pupils and manage behaviour effectively. In the best practice, teachers set clear objectives, lessons have good pace and pupils are stimulated to learn. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use an effective range of teaching strategies. Support staff generally contribute well to pupils' learning within classes and in additional support sessions. Where teaching has shortcomings, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, especially for those pupils who are more able.

All teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. In many classes, marking comments show what pupils have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Assessment for learning strategies are developing well and older pupils in key stage 2 are becoming increasingly skilled at assessing their own and other pupils' work. Individual pupil target setting is in place, but this is not yet having an impact on the standards achieved by most pupils. However, the school uses data well to track the progress of all pupils and to plan for additional support when required.

Reports to parents are informative and meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school encourages its pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle effectively and the wide range of extra-curricular clubs supports this well. These include many sports, music, computers and gardening activities, which are well attended by a majority of pupils.

The school provides well for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Assemblies promote a range of appropriate values and provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on current issues.

There are good links with a range of specialist services and these links impact well both on pupils' achievements. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Clearly targeted support for groups of vulnerable pupils has resulted in significant improvements in their attitudes, confidence and achievement. Intervention programmes are tailored well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The school identifies many pupils' additional learning needs effectively and ensures that these needs are met.

Learning environment: Good

The school very effectively promotes an inclusive environment and values the background and diversity of all its pupils. Pupils have equal access to all aspects of provision. There is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. The school promotes the values of equality and fairness well.

Wall displays around the school help to promote a positive learning environment but there is a lack of pupils' own work displayed in a few classrooms. The outside areas are especially well maintained. They are resourced effectively and used well as outdoor classrooms. Overall, there is an appropriate range of learning resources across the school.

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

The headteacher provides positive leadership. She has a clear vision and high expectations. In a relatively short time, she has introduced a number of initiatives, which are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards, particularly in literacy.

Since her appointment, the headteacher has collaborated well with staff and governors to set clear aims. Senior managers work well together and their role in setting the strategic direction of the school is developing. Leadership is now more widely distributed to make best use of staff's areas of expertise. Monitoring of teaching and learning has begun but the process is still in the early stages of development. Senior leaders meet to discuss planned changes, resourcing implications and target setting before taking these priorities forward to full staff meetings.

The governing body, which has had several changes recently, is very supportive and is now better informed about its role. Many governors have received training and this has enabled them to become more effective in analysing data and acting as critical friend of the school. Governors have a very good understanding of the performance of pupils. They are also generally aware of how pupils' performance compares with the performance of pupils in other similar schools.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation processes are based on a suitable range of first-hand evidence. This evidence includes careful analysis of the performance of pupils, observations of teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and seeking the views of teachers, pupils and parents. However, lesson observations do not always focus on well enough on evaluating the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.

The school's self-evaluation report is comprehensive and conveys an accurate picture of the school's current situation. Through work scrutiny and moderation activities leaders come to clear and accurate judgements about pupils' standards. The outcomes of the self-evaluation process are used well to determine targets for school improvement. Targets are focused clearly on raising standards and improving quality, particularly in literacy. The school is making good progress in achieving these targets.

A culture of collaboration and good teamwork is developing well in the school and this is helping to improve provision and is helping to raise standards. Most support staff are deployed effectively and are involved in key areas of development, for example in reading initiatives.

Partnership working: Good

The school has close partnerships with parents and is responsive to their views. Family learning programmes have had a positive impact on parents' ability to support their children with homework. The parent teacher association is very active and raises significant funds for the school. Parents, for instance, recently funded a new pupil friendly kitchen and now run a cookery club, which impacts positively on the development of pupils' life skills.

Links with local people through the community volunteer scheme are also having beneficial effects on targeted pupils' reading ability.

There are close links with other local schools to organise joint events such as the carol concert in the local church. Good, well-established links with the comprehensive school ensure smooth transition for Year 6 pupils to secondary education. Appropriate joint cluster arrangements are in place to moderate end of key stage teacher assessments.

Resource management: Good

The school identifies future targets appropriately and allocates resources well to these priorities. There are enough qualified teaching and support staff who are deployed appropriately throughout the school. The performance management process is developing well, although the process is not yet fully embedded. This results in lesson observations not always being evaluative enough with regards to the effect of teaching strategies and their impact on pupils' learning. Appropriate arrangements are made for teachers' preparation, planning and assessment time.

Good use is made of a range of community grants. These are obtained, in line with the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Recent spending on reading materials and mathematical equipment was clearly targeted and is having a positive impact on raising pupils' standards.

The school environment, including the building and outdoor areas, is maintained to a good standard and provides a positive learning environment for the pupils.

In view of the standards achieved and the careful management of resources the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Due to the small numbers of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments need to be treated with care. One pupil's results can have a significant impact on the school's overall performance.

In 2012 at the end of Foundation Phase, when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, results for pupils achieving outcome 5 (the expected level for seven-year-olds) placed the school in the upper 50% for language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. The school's results were slightly below average for personal and social development. Overall, the school performed above local and Wales averages. When compared to that of other schools in the same family, performance was above the average for language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development, but below the family average for personal and social development.

Results at the end of key stage 2, in English, mathematics and science have shown considerable variation over the last four years but are generally above the family average. In 2012, when compared to the comparative results of similar schools, results were in the upper 50% for mathematics, but the lower 50% for English and science. The school's results were above local averages but English and science results were below all-Wales averages.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance at the higher level (outcome 6) in language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development was slightly below the family average. However, performance in personal and social development was above the family average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5) in key stage 2, in all three subject areas, has fluctuated considerably over the last four years but was significantly above the family averages in 2012. This placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools.

In the Foundation Phase, at the expected level (outcome 5), boys outperform girls in language literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. However, more girls attain the higher level in language, literacy and communication. In key stage 2, there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls at the expected level in mathematics and science. Girls perform better than boys in English at both the expected and higher levels.

The school results, at the end of both key stages, show that there has been no significant difference in outcomes for pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Outcomes from the pupil questionnaire

Seventy-nine pupils completed the pupil questionnaire.

All pupils say that they feel safe in school. Nearly all feel that they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard. Nearly all think that the school deals well with any bullying and all pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. Nearly all pupils say that they are doing well at school and that staff help them to learn and make progress. Nearly all also say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work and feel that homework is useful. Nearly all pupils agree that the school teaches them to be healthy and that they have plenty of opportunities for regular exercise. Pupils' responses are broadly in line with those of pupils in schools across Wales.

Most pupils think that other pupils behave well in class and many say that this is also the case at break and lunchtimes. This response compares favourably with the views of pupils in other primary schools.

Outcomes from the parents' and carers questionnaire

Thirty-two parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Their responses closely match the responses of parents with pupils in primary schools across Wales. Nearly all parents state that they are satisfied with the school and all say that their child likes school. Nearly all parents feel that their child settled quickly into school life and all state that teaching is good with staff having high expectations of pupils. All parents say that their child is making good progress and nearly all think that behaviour is good and that staff treat pupils fairly and with respect.

All agree that homework is useful and nearly all think that they are well informed about their child's progress. All parents agree that pupils are provided with appropriate individual support if needed. They think that children are helped to mature and take on responsibility and that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. All state that their child feels safe in school and that their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. All agree that the school provides a good range of activities. All parents think that the school is well run and nearly all say that they are comfortable to approach staff with questions or suggestions. All parents say that they understand how to make a complaint should the need arise.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Sue Davies	Reporting Inspector
Rhona Edwards	Team Inspector
Terry Williams	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Sally-Ann Wright	Peer Inspector
Rhian Astley	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 Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	Reception, 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

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.