



*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**

**Millbank Primary School  
Clarke Street  
Ely  
Cardiff  
CF5 5AL**

**Date of inspection: December 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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	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

Millbank Primary School is an English-medium community school for pupils aged four to 11 years old and is maintained by Cardiff local authority. The school serves the Caerau area and almost all pupils come from Caerau or other parts of the Ely estate.

There are currently 128 pupils in the school, all of whom are of statutory school age. The number of pupils at the school has reduced in recent years but is expected to rise again in 2014 when the school will have its own nursery unit.

Just under 30% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is considerably higher than the percentage for Wales as a whole and higher than that for the City of Cardiff. The area the school serves is economically and socially disadvantaged. Half of the pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales.

The school identifies that nearly 40% of pupils have additional learning needs and a very few have a statement of special educational needs. Eighty-eight per cent of pupils are of white ethnic origin. Most of the remainder are of mixed race. Seven pupils speak English as an additional language and those pupils who are new to English receive additional support. A very few pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority.

No pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. All pupils learn Welsh as a second language in school.

The school was last inspected in November 2006. The headteacher was appointed in September 1997.

The individual school budget per pupil for Millbank Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £4,449 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £12,307 and the minimum is £2,873. Millbank Primary School is 10th out of the 99 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- outcomes at the end of key stage 2 and the Foundation Phase compare favourably with those of similar schools;
- standards in classes are good;
- care for pupils and arrangements for their wellbeing are good; and
- the school's leadership team and governors give effective leadership.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the school leadership team and governors have high expectations in terms of moving the school forward;
- staff and governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and aspects that need improvement;
- all staff are prepared to respond to the challenge of raising standards; and
- staff know pupils' needs and backgrounds well and respond to them appropriately.

## Recommendations

R1 Ensure that higher ability pupils achieve well by the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

R2 Improve the standards in Welsh second language in key stage 2.

R3 Ensure that all teachers have high enough expectations of more able pupils.

### What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

About half of the pupils have a low level of social and language skills upon entry to the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities are making good progress in their language skills. Standards of oracy are a strength. Pupils express their ideas coherently and justify their opinions. Standards of writing are good across the school. Pupils often write at length, particularly in English as a subject. Pupils write using a range of different registers in a good number of subjects. Although there are minor errors, the content is interesting and varied and handwriting is satisfactory.

Standards of reading are also a strength. In both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, nearly all pupils show enjoyment when reading books. They read aloud meaningfully, interpreting the text and explaining it well. Nearly all pupils understand a good range of vocabulary. Nearly all are familiar with different types of writing and they can explain their characteristics.

Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their personal targets. There is no discernible or consistent difference between the standards of boys and girls in class, or between the standards achieved by those who receive free school meals and those who pay for them.

Nearly all pupils throughout the school and across the ability range are making good progress in individual lessons and over a period of time. Nearly all recall facts quickly and accurately. Pupils co-operate well as members of a group and as individuals. Nearly all have good problem solving and thinking skills, which they use to improve their own learning. Many pupils use information and communication technology effectively in order to research group or individual tasks. Nearly all pupils have good numeracy skills, which are evident in specific mathematics lessons, though less evident in their other work across the curriculum. Most pupils learn how to become independent and confident learners.

Standards in Welsh are good in the Foundation Phase. Pupils can ask and answer a range of familiar questions confidently and many pupils demonstrate suitable reading skills. Standards are adequate in key stage 2. In Year 3 and Year 4, pupils use a wider range of vocabulary and structure than in the Foundation Phase, and can express their likes and dislikes but are less confident when reading. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 can use a good range of familiar language, but even the ablest throughout the whole key stage find it difficult to go beyond formulaic expressions. Pupils of all ages rarely apply their Welsh language skills outside the classroom.

Over the period 2009-2012, the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level at the end of key stage 2 is almost consistently better than that in other similar schools. Outcomes also often compare favourably with those of the local authority and Wales. There is some unevenness, however, from year to year and from subject to subject. More able pupils often do not achieve as well as pupils in similar schools.

In 2012, the school's outcomes for the Foundation Phase, at the expected level (outcome 5), were among the top half of those for schools with similar levels of free school meals for all indicators. However, pupil outcomes at the higher level (outcome 6) did not compare as favourably.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils feel very safe within the school and express confidence in the school's ability to address any instances of bullying effectively. They have a very clear understanding of what it takes to develop a healthy lifestyle and are appreciative of the school's role in helping them to eat healthily and get sufficient regular exercise.

Punctuality at the beginning of the day is good and attendance is improving. This was particularly evident in the last academic year. Although the data has not been verified, current attendance is also above the traditional average of similar schools.

Pupils are considerate, courteous and respectful of others. They are enthusiastic, well-motivated and active participants in their learning and nearly all apply themselves well to their tasks. Standards of behaviour are good.

Members of the school council and eco committee represent other pupils very well. Pupils' opinions are valued and through the school council and other committees they play an active role in deciding on new school initiatives and projects. The pupils benefit greatly from partnerships with the community, such as the Ely Festival and the community gardens project. As a result, almost all pupils are acquiring secure social skills for life outside school.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

The school provides a good range of learning experiences for its pupils and responds appropriately to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education. Teachers plan appropriate and interesting activities for pupils according to their age and interests, including specific programmes that match the abilities of pupils with additional learning needs. However, the work does not always challenge the more able pupils enough. The curriculum is enriched by contributions from outside speakers and visitors from the local community. Extracurricular activities support the curriculum well.

The planning is detailed for literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. These are integrated into both subject specific lessons and topic based 'curricular afternoons' successfully. The school uses teachers' interests and expertise well in order to develop pupils' ability to solve problems, work together and improve their own learning. This helps them become independent learners. The topic based provision is a particular strength in key stage 2.

The provision for the Welsh language within specific language lessons is good in the Foundation Phase and Year 3 and Year 4 but does not ensure that older pupils achieve good standards. Pupils are encouraged to speak the language but there are few opportunities for pupils to hear or practise Welsh outside formal Welsh lessons.

The school gives good attention to the Welsh dimension in the planning of its topics and subjects. This develops pupils' interest in their local area and an understanding of their heritage.

The provision for global citizenship and sustainability is a strength of the school's provision. Pupils' benefit well from their involvement in 'Healthy Schools' and 'Eco Schools' projects, including a scheme where the school has bred salmon fry and released them into the river Ely.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good in most lessons. Teachers and other adults have good subject knowledge and their expectations are high in terms of pupil behaviour. In addition, they use an appropriate range of learning and teaching methods. Individual lessons and series of lessons are planned carefully. Assistants who support specific groups of pupils or individuals contribute very well to learning. Teaching almost invariably develops pupils' language skills well. Almost without exception, staff provide carefully and effectively for pupils with average or lower ability. However, staff do not always challenge more able pupils well enough and in adequate lessons the pace of learning is too slow.

Most teachers use effective assessment methods during lessons in order to promote learning and encourage pupils to assess their own work. Almost all teachers mark work regularly. Most provide pupils with a fair evaluation of their work, along with useful advice on how to improve it. Staff keep detailed records on the work of individual pupils, along with portfolios that have been standardised and moderated in the core subjects. These give a clear picture of progress at an individual level and staff use the portfolios and other information well to assess pupils' work accurately. Parents and carers receive detailed, good quality personalised information on their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

A strength of the school is the very high level of care, support and guidance it gives to its pupils. Pupils feel valued and cared for within the school's nurturing environment and there is mutual respect between adults and pupils, and pupils with other pupils. The school works in very close partnership with many key agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

Staff know pupils' needs and backgrounds well and provide very effective learning experiences to promote their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school celebrates Individual and shared achievements and provides a wide range of opportunities, such as making a presentation at the International Poverty Summit. These opportunities help to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

The school has good policies and procedures for eliminating any oppressive behaviour or bullying.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are very effective procedures in place for supporting and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs. Individual education plans are appropriate and are evaluated regularly and updated in consultation with parents. As a result, nearly all pupils make the progress expected towards achieving the targets set for them.

### **Learning environment: Good**

This is a fully inclusive school whose policies and practices actively promote the principles of equality and diversity in line with its role as a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. The school ensures that there is equal access to all areas of its provision and addresses stereotypes in pupils' attitudes and expectations well. The school has an appropriate accessibility plan but current provision does not fully meet the needs of those with physical disabilities.

The school is well maintained and the buildings and outside areas meet the needs of pupils well. A high standard of wall displays contributes well to the learning environment, while the garden areas serve as an ideal outdoor classroom. Overall, there is a good sufficiency of learning resources. All this is much appreciated by pupils.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher has a well-defined vision that is supported and promoted by the governors and all staff. This strategic vision provides a clear direction to the development of the school. The senior leadership team meet regularly and provide effective leadership.

Throughout the school, the staff understand and fulfil their roles well. They have clearly defined responsibilities and work effectively as a team. The commitment of the pupils and staff to develop the school as a working community has a positive effect on the ethos of the school.

Performance management arrangements are structured well. They identify suitable professional development opportunities for all staff and contribute well to raising standards. The successful training and deployment of support staff to raise standards, particularly in literacy, is a strength of the school. Staff meetings focus on the priorities identified for school improvement and their implementation. This results in both improved consistency and practice.

Governors are well informed about their roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures. They provide the school with effective support and challenge. They have a good understanding of the school's performance. The governing body attends relevant training and makes a valuable contribution to the running of the school.

The school fulfils national and local initiatives effectively. It has given particular attention to developing pupils' literacy skills and wellbeing.



### **Improving quality: Good**

The school has well-established self-evaluation procedures, which involve all stakeholders. These provide staff and governors with an accurate overview of school performance. Careful analysis and use of assessment data support the teachers in their judgements on how well the school is performing in comparison with other similar schools. The headteacher also makes effective use of the local authority's monitoring reports.

The self-evaluation report clearly outlines strengths and areas for development. There is a close link between self-evaluation outcomes and school improvement plan priorities. Planning for improvement is effective and supported well through the allocation of resources. The plan includes success criteria and quantifiable targets. These enable the staff to measure the effects of improvement on pupil standards accurately.

Staff are supported well by continuous professional development and benefit from opportunities to share good practice with others. The training programme is planned effectively for support staff. This provides them with the skills and knowledge to be extremely effective in their role, especially in their support for pupils with additional learning needs.

Effective networks of professional practice have been established with other schools in the cluster, in the family and with other partners. These networks have contributed well to developing leadership and improving effectiveness in the delivery of skills, such as problem solving, improving their own learning and working with others.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has an effective range of partnerships, which contribute successfully to improving the quality of provision for pupils. Partnerships with parents are strong. As a result, they support the school's work well. Parents are very appreciative of the range and quality of help provided for them.

Successful links between several nurseries and pre-school provision ensure that pupils settle into school routines quickly. Transfer arrangements agreed upon by the cluster of schools and the secondary schools enable older pupils to be prepared appropriately for the next stage in their education. There are useful links with a range of primary schools in the cluster and in the family of schools to ensure that good practice is shared.

Partnerships with both the local community and communities further afield have a positive impact on pupils' experiences and values. International partnerships, links with other countries and appropriate charities develop pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its resources well. It is appropriately staffed and resourced. Pupils benefit from the work of specialists in physical education and music. Support

staff are deployed well and they work purposefully alongside teachers in the classroom, in the office or on appropriate duties or tasks throughout the day. Effective performance managements systems have been established over a period of time. All members of staff collaborate effectively to create an exciting and attractive environment for pupils.

Managers prioritise and monitor expenditure carefully in order to ensure that it remains within budget. The school's areas for improvement are appropriately resourced. The school provides good value for money in terms of pupil outcomes, provision and its use of finances.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Estyn compares the outcomes of schools against those of their free-school-meal group and their family of schools

The school's outcomes over the period 2009-2012 as regards the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level at the end of key stage 2 are almost consistently better than the outcomes for schools that belong to the same family. They also often compare favourably with local authority and all-Wales averages. There is some unevenness, however, from year to year and from subject to subject. More able pupils do not generally achieve as well as other pupils in the same family.

Outcomes in 2012 in key stage 2 were not as good as those for 2011, though almost without exception they were better, sometimes significantly better, than the average for schools in the same family. Outcomes in oracy in 2012 however, especially those of boys, were not as good as those in the other language skills assessed and were below the average for the family. Outcomes in English, reading and writing skills have generally been better than those for mathematics and science. There has been a particular strength in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in a combination of reading, writing, mathematics and science.

The school's outcomes, in terms of the proportion of pupils who achieve above the expected level at the end of key stage 2, are usually below those of other schools in the same family.

The school's outcomes in terms of the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level at the end of key stage 2 often place the school in the top half and occasionally in the top quarter of schools in the same free school meal band. This is consistently true of the proportion of pupils attaining the key stage 2 core subject indicator and level 4 in English. Outcomes in mathematics and science have been more variable and were not so good in 2012 as in the previous three years. Although the school was in the top quarter of similar schools in 2010 and the top half of schools in 2011, its outcomes in mathematics placed it in the bottom half of similar schools in 2009 and 2012. Outcomes for science placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools in 2010, in the top half of similar schools in 2009 and 2011 but in the bottom half of similar schools in 2012.

Pupils' attainment at the higher than expected level (level 5) does not generally compare well with that of schools in the same free school meal group. In the past two years, the school's outcomes in English, mathematics and science have placed it in either the lower half or lowest quarter of similar schools.

In 2012, the school's outcomes for the Foundation Phase placed it among the top half of schools that have similar levels of free school meals for all indicators. The proportion of pupils achieving the Foundation Phase indicator and outcome 5 in language, literature and communication skills was significantly above the average for the schools in the same family. Outcomes in the two remaining indicators were above the family average. However, pupil outcomes at the higher level (outcome 6) did not compare as favourably.

During the period 2009-2012, there has been no consistent difference between the performance of boys and girls at the end of the Foundation Phase and the end of key stage 2. Any differences have usually been less than those experienced in similar schools.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parents/carers' questionnaires**

Twenty parents or carers completed the questionnaires. All parents or carers state that they either 'agree strongly with' or 'agree with' all the statements in all 19 questions. Thus, the proportion of parents with positive responses to the questionnaire is above the average compared with that of parents of pupils in the primary schools in Wales, inspected between 2010 and 2012.

Particularly significant is the fact that all parents are very satisfied with the school and state that their children are happy there.

Nearly all parents were also very satisfied that:

- the school is well run;
- the staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- their children are safe in the school; and
- they are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or suggestions or a problem.

#### **Responses to pupils' questionnaires**

All pupils in key stage 2 completed questionnaires. All pupils feel that:

- the school teaches them to be healthy;
- there are lots of chances at school for them to get regular exercise; and
- the teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress;

Nearly all pupils feel that:

- they are safe in school;
- they know whom to turn to if they are worried or upset;
- they are doing well in school;
- they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard;
- homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school; and
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do the work.

Most pupils feel that:

- other children behave well and they can get their work done; and
- nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time.

Many pupils feel that the school deals well with any bullying.

More girls than boys feel that pupils behave well at playtime and lunchtime but the overall percentage of pupils who are happy with other pupils' behaviour at these periods is significantly higher than the average from other primary schools inspected.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Gareth Wyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Anwen Hurley	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Kathryn Thomas	Peer Inspector
Gail Allen	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://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