



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

**Nant Celyn Primary School
Henllys Way
Cwmbran
Torfaen
NP44 7DJ**

Date of inspection: September 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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Publication date: 27/11/2012

Context

Nant Celyn Primary School is in Cwmbran in Torfaen. It was opened in 2010 following the amalgamation of two local primary schools. Nearly all pupils reside locally with a few pupils coming from the surrounding area as Nant Celyn is a regional centre for the Hearing Impaired. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and the school describes the area it serves as having some significant economic and social disadvantage. Currently, around 29% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is above local and national averages and is rising slowly.

There are currently 343 pupils on roll. Pupils are organised into 15 classes, including two for pupils who receive additional support for hearing impairments. The school admits pupils to the reception class at the age of four. There are 15 full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. They are assisted by 20 full-time and two part-time learning support staff.

The school has three pupils who are 'looked after' by the local authority. Eleven pupils receive support for English as an additional language. The school has identified around 21% of pupils as having additional learning needs, including 15 pupils with a statement of special educational need. English is the predominant home language of most pupils. Very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background and almost no pupils use Welsh as their first language. Five pupils received fixed-term exclusions within the last year.

The individual school budget per pupil for Nant Celyn Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4,150 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Torfaen is £7,173 and the minimum is £2,725. Nant Celyn Primary School is third out of the 31 primary schools in Torfaen in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the school is adequate because:

- many pupils make satisfactory progress overall;
- pupils who have extra support for their learning make good progress;
- standards of pupils' wellbeing are good;
- pupils' standards in information and communication technology are very high; and
- attendance levels are improving.

However:

- standards in end of key stage assessments are in the lower 50% of those for similar schools;
- standards in Welsh language in key stage 2 are unsatisfactory; and
- many pupils do not read or write to a sufficiently high standard.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement of the school are adequate because:

- there have been significant improvements in pupils' behaviour;
- the investment in information and communication technology has resulted in high standards by pupils; and
- the findings of the school's self-evaluation are generally accurate.

However:

- teaching and assessment vary too much in quality from class to class; and
- leaders and managers are not rigorous enough in addressing shortcomings in the school.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards in end of key stage assessments in both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.
- R2 Raise standards of reading and writing across the school.
- R3 Raise standards of pupils' Welsh language.
- R4 Raise the levels of expectation and challenge provided for pupils in lessons.
- R5 Improve feedback for pupils so that they are clear about how to improve their work.
- R6 Improve the rigour with which leaders and managers respond to shortcomings in teaching and learning

What happens next?

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Generally, around half of pupils enter the school with skills lower than would normally be expected of pupils of a similar age. In around half of classes, many pupils make good progress but this varies too much between different age groups and classes. Consequently, not all pupils make as much progress as they could.

Many Foundation Phase pupils listen well and speak clearly. They can explain their ideas adding suitable details. A majority of key stage 2 pupils talk confidently in front of other pupils and to adults. They talk with interest about their work and experiences. The other pupils are reluctant speakers and do not always listen well in class.

Many pupils make appropriate progress in their writing so by the end of the Foundation Phase they communicate meaning effectively through simple words and phrases. They have an understanding of how sentences work. A few more able pupils use appropriate and interesting vocabulary and show an awareness of the reader. They often develop their Ideas in a sequence of connected sentences with capital letters and full stops, which they generally use consistently. These pupils normally spell simple words correctly, and use letter sounds and names to attempt more difficult words. However, nearly all pupils' handwriting is poorly formed.

A majority of key stage 2 pupils do not make enough progress in their writing. While more able pupils do well overall, a minority do not write at length or with enough detail or expression. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary. They do not present their work well, spell with enough care or accuracy, or write neatly.

Many pupils in the reception classes are developing a good awareness of the importance of books and how they work. Many re-tell well-known stories and tales. By the end of Year 2, only a minority of pupils read with enough clarity, fluency and expression. A majority are not able to read common words easily or make a 'good guess' at unknown words by using letter sounds and names.

A minority of Year 6 pupils read well. These pupils use suitable fluency and expression, but even these better readers are not always able to explain the meaning of a story or to talk about what they think will happen next. Almost all pupils struggle to use an index page in a reference book. Very few pupils can talk about their favourite books or authors, or read regularly and widely.

Many pupils have very high standards in information and communication technology. Many reception class pupils are able to record and play back pictures and videos of themselves. Older pupils programme 'toys' to obey commands and produce high-quality audio-visual presentations.

Many boys in the Foundation Phase achieve similarly to girls. However, more able girls do better than more able boys. Although the gap reduced in 2012, boys in key stage 2 perform significantly worse than girls and the gap in performance is often the widest in the family. Pupils entitled to free school meals do almost as well as other pupils.

Younger pupils in the hearing impairment resource provision generally make good progress, especially in their early communication and literacy skills, including signing. Pupils in the key stage 2 provision make adequate progress overall. These pupils develop good communication skills, but do not make enough progress in writing or in presenting their work.

Nearly all pupils who receive additional support for their English or who are 'looked after' by the local authority make suitable progress.

Pupils make a good start in their Welsh language in the reception class, but this progress is not maintained in the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, standards are unsatisfactory. Very few pupils are able to respond correctly to sentence patterns or use any Welsh beyond simple greetings. They write with a very limited range of sentence patterns or vocabulary.

In 2012, Foundation Phase pupils attained less well than pupils in similar schools (those with a similar percentage of free school meals) and less well than pupils in other schools in Nant Celyn's family of schools (schools that face similar challenges). Generally, more able pupils achieved well, especially in mathematical development where the school is among the top 25% of similar schools.

Other than in science, assessment results in key stage 2 in 2012 were higher than in 2011. However, overall the school does less well on average than similar schools and the school's family.

More able pupils at the end of key stage 2 attain well with around one-third of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science. This places the school in the higher 50% of similar schools and above the average for the family.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils are friendly and polite. Nearly all know what it means to be fit and healthy. They feel happy and safe in school and many enjoy their learning. Most behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that little bullying occurs but when it does staff deal with occasional incidences promptly.

Many pupils work well independently and in groups. Many are involved in setting targets to improve their learning, but most do not contribute regularly to planning what they learn. A very few pupils have difficulty in maintaining concentration in lessons.

A minority of pupils are involved with the community through, for example, singing with the school choir or fundraising activities. Older pupils take responsibility as a 'Playground Buddy' or as member of the eco committee.

The school council and eco-committee play an increasingly active part in the life of the school. Pupils involved are confident that their voice is being heard and they are effectively involved in planning school improvements. Recent developments include fund-raising events, design of the school uniform, choosing after-school clubs, influencing school dinners, naming the new school and choices of behaviour rewards.

Pupils' attendance, at around 93%, is improving and places the school in the top 50% of similar schools. Most pupils are punctual.

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

Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and an appropriate range of learning experiences that meet the needs of a majority of pupils, including those in the hearing impairment resource provision. It makes effective use of small groups to raise standards for pupils in need of additional support for their literacy skills.

Provision for information and communication technology is generally of a very high standard, particularly where pupils work on modelling and multi-media presentations. This has significantly contributed to the high standards pupils achieve. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills.

There is very little opportunity for pupils to read independently or to an adult. This results in pupils failing to gain the breadth and regularity of reading necessary to develop their skills and to make appropriate progress.

In many classes and around the school, staff provide very few opportunities for pupils to learn the Welsh language. In key stage 2, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with the recommended time for the teaching of Welsh language. This has a strong negative impact on the standards pupils achieve. Similarly, the school does little to promote pupils' understanding of the history and culture of Wales.

The school acts in a sustainable way, but the education for sustainable development is limited in a few classes. Provision for global citizenship is well developed. Pupils learn about other countries and cultures through, for example, a study of Patagonia and video conferencing with pupils in Hong Kong.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs for the pupils. These are well supported and have a positive on pupils' wellbeing.

Teaching: Adequate

Most teachers have good subject knowledge, develop good working relationships with pupils and plan a range of interesting activities for them. Teachers' classroom management is generally effective and they use resources to good effect, including those for pupils with hearing impairments. Nearly all teachers manage and work well with the additional adults in the classroom to support pupils. In most lessons staff

use a range of skilful questions to help pupils work more effectively. Where planning is best, staff provide pupils with work that challenges their thinking and understanding.

In just less than half of lessons, teachers do not plan suitably to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not challenge pupils well and so pupils' progress is limited.

At the end of lessons, staff make good use of systems such as 'thumbs-up or thumbs-down' to check pupils' understanding. Although teachers mark pupils work regularly, they do not regularly provide pupils with sufficient written or oral feedback. Consequently, although pupils have targets, many pupils do not have clear enough guidance on what they need to do next to improve their work.

The school makes effective use of records to track pupils' progress. It identifies successfully and quickly pupils in need of additional support for both learning and wellbeing.

Annual reports to parents are detailed and informative.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school makes effective provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for the promotion of healthy living. It has good procedures for developing pupils' wellbeing and has made significant improvements, particularly in standards of pupils' behaviour. The school makes good use of very effective external support in this area.

Pupils in the hearing impairment resource provision have good support, for example with signing. The useful home-school diary helps parents of pupils with hearing impairments to keep in touch with the school. This helps both school and home to support pupils' needs and wellbeing more effectively.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. The school has developed an effective system to identify pupils' learning needs, produces clear 'child friendly' individual education plans and provides a well-structured programme of support for their needs. The school keeps parents of these pupils suitably involved and informed.

There are effective procedures in place for monitoring and promoting the attendance and punctuality of pupils.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school is very welcoming to pupils, parents and visitors. It has a strong inclusive ethos where all pupils are valued and receive equal access to the school's provision.

There are resources of good quality that match the needs of all pupils. Resources available for information and communication technology are of very high quality.

The quality of the accommodation is very good and it is well maintained. The new school building provides a stimulating learning environment for all pupils. There are excellent outdoor facilities for physical education and games. The school has outstanding facilities for the support of pupils with hearing impairments and multi-media work. Staff use these to good effect in their teaching.

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

The headteacher and senior managers have worked effectively to create a comprehensive vision for the school. Communication within the school is effective and daily staff briefings keep all staff well informed about what is happening in the school.

Roles and responsibilities of staff are generally clear. The school's systems of performance management are generally appropriate. The senior leadership team has been extended to involve more staff effectively, including those from the hearing impairment resource provision, in the management of the school.

Although leaders and managers are aware of shortcomings in the quality of teaching and provision, they do not do enough to challenge these shortcomings and to ensure measureable improvements across the school.

Governors know the school and the challenges it faces, especially through regular visits to school. They are supportive of the school and most governors have a thorough understanding of the school's standards through their careful scrutiny of data. They have had a key influence in the changed management structure, but do not always challenge the school sufficiently to account for the standards it achieves.

The school's senior managers are making progress in addressing national priorities, for example in raising standards of literacy and minimising the impact of social deprivation on pupils. This work is at an early stage of development.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's self-evaluation report provides an honest and realistic assessment of the school's strengths, areas for development and the progress made since its establishment. The school's leaders and managers analyse data rigorously and know where improvements are needed in pupils' achievements. They use an appropriate range of mechanisms that draw on first-hand evidence. They consult pupils and parents regularly, especially to gather their views on the effectiveness of new initiatives. Governors and staff are involved fully in the self-evaluation process.

The school has made good progress in improving attendance, the standards of behaviour of pupils, the provision and standards achieved by pupils in information and communication technology. However, they have made limited progress in

raising standards of literacy and mathematics in key stage 2. There is little evidence of improvements in teaching, assessment and Welsh language. Leaders have not consistently monitored the impact of initiatives on pupils and the standards they achieve.

The current school improvement plan has a range of appropriate priorities, but it does not always give enough guidance and direction on them. For example, the timescales for tracking and measuring improvements are not clear enough.

The school is at an early stage in developing a strong learning community. A minority of staff work together well to track and monitor pupils' progress in oracy, reading and mathematics.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a range of useful and purposeful partnerships that benefit the school and its pupils. There are well-established links with the local cluster of primary schools and effective arrangements to support the transition of nearly all pupils from the primary school to the local secondary school. There are also good arrangements for moderation of standards of pupils' work across the cluster of local primary schools.

The school is particularly effective in sharing its expertise in using information and communications technology for learning with other schools.

The school has good initiatives to involve parents in the life of the school and to enable them to take a more active role in supporting their children. These include the 'join your child in school afternoon', a home-school club, and special events, such as a family values meeting at which parents can find out more about what their children are doing in school. These have had a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and attendance.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has well-established procedures for ensuring that the school has appropriate staff to meet the needs of its increasing school population. Leaders and managers generally prioritise expenditure well. The school makes sure that all staff are deployed appropriately to meet pupils needs. There are appropriate arrangements for teachers' preparation, planning and assessment time.

Staff have good opportunities for continuing professional development, apart from in relation to the development of their Welsh language skills, and new staff are supported well when they first join the school.

The school makes satisfactory use of its funding and resources and pupils achieve adequate standards. It therefore gives adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

A minority of pupils enter the school with skills that are lower than would normally be expected of pupils of a similar age.

Foundation Phase assessments in 2012, when compared with results of pupils in schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools for language, literacy and communication and mathematical development, and in the lowest 25% for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. The Foundation Phase indicator (the percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcomes in all areas) places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. Outcomes are all lower than average for the school's family (schools that face similar challenges).

Generally, more able pupils achieved well, especially in mathematical development, where the school is among the top 25% of similar schools. Outcomes are in the upper 50% of those for similar schools for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, but in the lower 50% for language, literacy and communication. More able pupils attain better than the average of schools in the family.

Other than in science, assessment results in key stage 2 were higher in 2012 than in 2011. However, the school continues to do less well than similar schools as it is in the lower 50% for mathematics, English and the core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in all areas), and in the lowest 25% for science. Results are all lower than average for the school's family.

More able pupils attain well with around one-third of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science. This puts the school in the higher 50% of similar schools and above the average for the family.

Younger boys often achieve as well as girls. Although the gap reduced in 2012, boys in key stage 2 perform significantly less well than girls and the gap is often the widest in the family. Pupils entitled to free school meals do only slightly less well than other pupils.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Response to parents' questionnaire

Twenty-three parents responded to the questionnaire.

Almost all parents report that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their child likes school and is making good progress;
- teaching is good;
- their child is safe in school;
- pupils have appropriate additional support if necessary;
- the school helps their child to be more mature and take on responsibility; and
- their child is well prepared for moving on to high school.

Most parents think that:

- the school helps children to settle in well; and
- treats all pupils equally and with respect.

A few parents believe that:

- pupils do not behave well in school;
- the school does not do enough to encourage children to be healthy and take regular exercise;
- the school is not well run; or
- there is a good range of trips or visits

In many cases, the parents' responses are broadly similar to those in other primary schools across Wales.

Response to pupils' questionnaire

One hundred and eight pupils responded to the questionnaire.

Most pupils think that:

- they feel safe in school;
- the school teaches them how to be healthy;
- they know whom to talk to if worried or upset;
- they get enough exercise;
- teachers help them to make progress;
- they know whom to ask if they find their work difficult;
- they are doing well in school;
- there are enough books and equipment available for them to do their work; and
- pupils behave well at breaktime and lunchtimes.

A few pupils express dissatisfaction with the way the school deals with any bullying.

A minority of pupils think that other children do not behave well in class and this interferes with their work.

The views of pupils are similar to most pupils in other schools in Wales other than in relation to classroom behaviour and bullying where their views are slightly more negative than average.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Richard Hawkley	Reporting Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector
Sue Willan	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Sharon Davies	Peer Inspector
Amanda Jones	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.