



*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**

**Pontrhondda Primary School,  
Pontrhondda Road,  
Llwynypia,  
Tonypandy,  
CF40 2SZ**

**Date of inspection: May 2012**

**by**

**Dr David Gareth Evans**

**for**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
<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

The school is situated in the village of Llwynypia, in the Rhondda Valley and caters for pupils aged 4 to 11 years of age. The number on roll is 122. The socio-economic background of the locality is considered to be disadvantaged and the school is in a designated Communities First area. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is well above the all-Wales and local averages. Most enter the school from the nearby nursery school. Around 30% are on the additional learning needs register, and this is above national and local averages. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The home language of all pupils is English and no one uses Welsh as their mother tongue.

The school was last inspected in June 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Pontrhondda Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,354 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £6,499 and the minimum is £2,788. Pontrhondda Primary School is 55th out of the 114 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf 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:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve well;
- pupils' wellbeing is good;
- the quality of most teaching is good; and
- assessment procedures are effective and enable pupils to receive the support they need.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear direction for the school; there is an effective link between self-evaluation and school improvement;
- the school makes good use of a wide range of data to improve pupil performance; and
- the school has successfully addressed recommendations from the last inspection and a recent local authority review.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 raise standards in extended writing across the curriculum;

R2 raise standards in Welsh second language in key stage 2;

R3 ensure that monitoring of lesson observations is sharply focused on standards and areas for improvement;

R4 develop the strategic role of the governing body and ensure that governors are more involved in the self-evaluation process; and

R5 improve attendance rates.

### **What happens next?**

*The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.*

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Pupils listen carefully and attentively to staff and to each other. They speak clearly and confidently in class and when working in groups. Many provide thoughtful and often lengthy responses, using suitable terms and vocabulary. Most are keen readers and read well. In the Foundation Phase they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds and many read texts accurately. By the end of key stage 2, most are confident readers. They understand the key features of an increasingly demanding and wide range of texts and explain their views and opinions. Most extract information effectively from a variety of sources.

Many pupils' writing contains interesting and well-developed content, using an increasingly expanding vocabulary and an appropriate range of styles. Most in the Foundation Phase write and spell simple words accurately and show a basic understanding of punctuation. By the end of key stage 2, they tackle writing tasks with enthusiasm and confidence. They often write at length in English lessons for a variety of purposes and audiences, using interesting expressions, thoughtful constructions and a well-developed vocabulary. However, many do not develop their writing skills well enough in other subjects across the curriculum. Most pupils' writing contains accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar, but a few still make simple errors. Handwriting and the presentation of work are generally good.

Most pupils have good numeracy skills. They have secure knowledge and understanding of numbers and calculate effectively. They record and interpret data appropriately. They have good information and communications technology skills which they use effectively to support their learning in subjects across the curriculum. However, their thinking skills are less well developed.

Pupils develop their Welsh language skills well in the Foundation Phase. However, in key stage 2 most do not use Welsh effectively during the day and lack confidence in initiating simple conversations.

Pupil performance in key stage 1 in the three core subjects has generally been in the top 50% of similar schools in three of the last four years, although results in science were lower in 2011. Attainment has generally been above the family of schools in key stage 1, but mathematics and science have often been below family averages in key stage 2. Results in key stage 2 have fluctuated; in English and mathematics they were in the bottom 25% of schools in 2011, but in the previous year they were in the top 25%. Girls have generally outperformed boys in English and science in key stage 2 over the last few years, but there is no obvious pattern in key stage 1.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and concentrate well. Most make good progress in gaining new knowledge and understanding and in

developing and applying their skills. Those with additional learning needs achieve well in relation to their abilities, but those on free school meals have tended to achieve less well than their peers in the last few years, although the gap is narrowing.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

The school is an inclusive, happy and caring community. All pupils feel secure in school and fully involved in school activities. They have positive attitudes to keeping safe and healthy and understand the need to take exercise and to eat healthily.

Most pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school; they are highly motivated and display a keen interest in learning. Most know how well they are doing and what steps they must take to improve their work.

Most pupils behave exceptionally well in and around school and show great respect for others. They are extremely polite and courteous and relate very well to each other and to adults. Most express a great deal of pride in their school.

The school council is effective and members' responsibilities are clear. They are involved in decision-making and make a worthwhile contribution to improving the school environment.

Despite the good work by the school to raise attendance levels, attendance at 90% is below local, national and family averages. Most pupils arrive at school punctually.

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

Learning experiences meet the needs of most pupils effectively. Teachers plan a broad and balanced curriculum, based on a range of topics that interest most pupils. Foundation Phase experiences prepare pupils well for the move to key stage 2.

Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough. Generally, the school develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively, but pupils have too few chances to use their extended writing and thinking skills in other subjects.

The promotion of the Welsh heritage and culture is a positive feature of the school. Pupils' awareness of this is promoted effectively through lessons, music, creative activities and appropriate celebrations. However provision for the Welsh language is less well developed.

The school offers a range of good experiences in order to capture pupils' interest in sustainable development. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible citizens and to play an active part in the local and global communities. Through a study of other countries, and through the eco council, appropriate opportunities are

given for pupils to collect for charities, recycle, use less energy and buy fair trade goods.

### **Teaching: Good**

Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with examples of excellent practice. All teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and relationships are good; they act as good role models. They plan interesting activities with clear learning objectives and this ensures that most pupils are fully engaged in lessons. In most classes, tasks are suitably matched to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs and those who are more able and talented.

All teachers involve pupils in discussions and support them well when they are working. They use questioning appropriately, but in a minority of lessons there is over-direction by teachers and this inhibits pupils' thinking skills. Learning support staff are very committed and support pupils well.

Pupils' progress is assessed regularly. A good range of assessment for learning strategies is in place, and these are consistently applied.

All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and carefully and, in the best examples, comments always make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. Teachers provide pupils with useful oral feedback.

Annual reports to parents and carers are of a good quality and provide useful information on pupils' progress. Parents say they are very pleased with the quality of the information they receive.

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

The school has effective arrangements in place to support pupils' health and wellbeing. Pupils are encouraged to express opinions, to contribute effectively to developments in the school and to be associated with activities in the local community.

Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Personal and social education is carefully planned and plays an important part in the curriculum.

The school works successfully with specialist services, such as police, health and social services, and this helps pupils to achieve well. The high standards of behaviour and the strong relationships between staff and pupils help create a positive ethos of respect within the school.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

The school provides high quality support for pupils with additional learning needs that helps them to achieve well. Effective assessment procedures enable staff to diagnose difficulties at an early stage. Staff regularly review pupils' progress



and update their individual educational plans. The school keeps parents well informed and fully involved in their child's progress.

**Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive community and all pupils are valued and treated equally. It has adopted a range of effective policies that promote equality of opportunity and entitlement for all pupils in every aspect of the school's provision. Very well planned and implemented arrangements enable learners to have access to all areas of the school, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

There is a wide range of resources to support teaching and learning, which are well matched to pupils' needs. The school premises are kept in very good condition. Colourful and informative displays in classrooms and communal areas celebrate pupils' work and achievements.

The school's grounds are well maintained and include markings for various games and activities.

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

The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have a clear vision, which is shared effectively with staff and governors; together they offer effective leadership and management. Strategic plans have a positive impact on standards, wellbeing and provision across the school.

Leaders know the school well and set challenging targets and expectations. They ensure that their effectiveness is monitored regularly and that any further developments receive attention.

Responsibilities are shared effectively with every member of staff having invaluable opportunities to contribute towards aspects of management across the school. Performance management arrangements are appropriate and the priorities in the development plan reflect the targets set.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and committed to its success. Its understanding of the school's performance is developing gradually, but governors do not act as critical friends or operate strategically to challenge the school. Their role in self evaluation is underdeveloped.

National and local priorities are supported well and reflected in such strategies as improving literacy and developments in the Foundation Phase.

**Improving quality: Good**

Leaders and managers have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The process increasingly involves all staff in discussing

outcomes and their own performance.

Self-evaluation draws on a good range of information. Pupil performance data is carefully analysed to identify how well pupils achieve. The school seeks the views of pupils, parents/carers and the local authority and acts on this information appropriately. Consequently, the school knows itself well.

Priorities from self-evaluation link clearly to the school development plan. The school sets itself challenging targets and sets out appropriate strategies for improvement.

The school has structured monitoring procedures, including lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work. However, lesson observations are too focused on provision and less so on standards and areas for improvement.

The school is part of a learning community and professional networks across the cluster of schools in the area have a positive effect on the quality of provision.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has a close partnership with the local authority. It has adopted several initiatives that have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in relation to assessment.

The partnership with local schools is strong and new practices are often introduced jointly, especially those that promote pupils' standards. The school plays an active part in the local school cluster arrangements for assessment, moderation and standardisation of pupils' work at the end of key stage 2.

The school has a strong partnership with parents, who are extremely positive about all aspects of school life. They feel that they are welcomed and that the school considers their views actively. This has a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning.

The school is an integral part of its community and it makes extensive and imaginative use of a number of locations in order to enrich pupils' learning experiences.

### **Resource management: Good**

Teaching and support staff are deployed appropriately in order to meet the needs of all pupils. In particular, the school makes good use of staff expertise to raise standards in music and physical education.

Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils in all classes. There is effective management of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time.

The school manages its finances well. Expenditure is carefully prioritised and monitored and the school's identified improvement targets are appropriately

resourced.

In view of the effective use of its funding and the good progress made by most pupils, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

In assessments at the end of key stage 1 the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination was higher than the figures for Wales and the family of similar schools in 2009 and 2010, but lower in 2011. In general, the patterns are similar in these subjects individually. The percentage of pupils who achieved level 3 in English in 2011 was higher than the average for the family of similar schools.

In English, the results were consistently higher than those of the family over the last few years. Compared to schools with the same percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' performance in key stage 1 is generally within the top 50% of schools in the last four years. Results in science were lower in 2011.

In key stage 2, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science in combination has fluctuated in comparison with the family of schools' average in the last five years.

In English, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 or higher has generally been higher than the average figure for the family of schools in four of the last five years. Performance in reading and writing, however, has declined over the last three years and in 2011 it was lower than the average figure for the family of schools. In 2011, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 4 in English, mathematics and science in combination placed the school among the lower 50% in comparison with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals.

Performance in English, mathematics and science has varied from the bottom 25% to the top 25% in comparison with the results of similar schools in recent years. Attainment at level 5 in the three core subjects has varied over the last five years and the percentage of pupils who attained level 5 or higher has often been above the average figures for the family of schools over the last five years.

Girls have generally outperformed boys in English and science in key stage 2 over the last few years, but there is no obvious pattern in key stage 1.

## Appendix 2

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Learner questionnaires**

There were 54 responses from pupils. All pupils say: they feel safe in school; teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress; they know who to talk to if they are worried or upset; they are taught how to stay healthy; they know what to do or who to ask if they find their work hard; they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work; and they think other children behave well at play and lunchtimes. Nearly all pupils agree that school deals well with any bullying; and the school provides regular opportunities for exercise. Most pupils think they are doing well at school; and they say that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. Many pupils believe that other pupils behave well and they can get their work done in class.

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Thirty-one responses were received from parents and most expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school and this is in line with national comparisons. They were unanimous that their children like school, that they are making good progress and that they are safe at school. All believe that the school is well run and they are also of the opinion that teachers work effectively and encourage children to work hard. All agree that staff treat all children fairly and with respect. All parents are satisfied with the school in general.

Nearly all believe that pupils' behaviour is good and that the teaching is good. Nearly all who responded feel comfortable in asking the school a question, making suggestions or identifying a problem. Nearly all state that their children are encouraged to be healthy and to undertake regular physical exercise and nearly all believe that children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs. They are also happy with the information they receive on pupils' progress and they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Dr David Gareth Evans	Reporting Inspector
Mr Enir R. Morgan	Team Inspector
Mr Ivor Petherick	Lay Inspector
Ms Jaci Bates	Peer Inspector
Mrs Rhian Rees	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

## **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.