



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

**Rhydypenau Primary School
Rhydypenau Primary
Fidlas Avenue
Cardiff
CF14 0NX**

Date of inspection: October 2011

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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Context

Rhydypenau Primary School is a community school serving an established residential area within north Cardiff. The school reports that most pupils come from homes that are relatively advantaged and a few from homes that are economically disadvantaged. Most pupils start school with high levels of skills that are appropriate to their age and ability.

The school has 501 pupils aged three to 11 years old, which includes 80 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Children enter the nursery in the term after their third birthday. The school is either full or oversubscribed in every year group.

English is the predominant language spoken at home. Around 20% of pupils are from ethnic minority background and approximately 10% speak English as an additional language. English is the main language of communication in the school and Welsh is taught as a second language.

Three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the local authority and Wales average. Eleven per cent of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs. Three have a statement of special educational needs.

Pupils are accommodated within a range of buildings. The Foundation Phase pupils are taught in the original permanent building, constructed in 1936 for approximately 100 pupils. The remaining pupils are accommodated within temporary buildings, most of which were erected in the 1940s and the 1960s.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Rhydypenau Primary School is £2,900, which compares with a maximum of £14,067 and a minimum of £2,787 for primary schools in Cardiff. The school has the 97th highest budget per pupil out of the 102 primary schools in Cardiff.

The headteacher has been in post since April 1997.

The school was previously inspected during the autumn term 2005.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is good because:

- the school's development of pupils' thinking skills and ability to learn independently is sector leading practice;
- all pupils make good progress and achieve their potential;
- nearly all pupils are highly motivated and enjoy learning; and
- the curriculum is extremely rich and varied.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and the leadership team communicate a strong sense of purpose and direction to the work of the school;
- this vision is shared and understood by all staff and governors;
- the school's self evaluation is evaluative and effective in highlighting the school's strengths and areas for improvement; and
- the school implements appropriate strategies to meet objectives for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 raise standards in Welsh throughout the school;

R2 continue to improve the standards of English in the Foundation Phase; and

R3 continue to share the best practice in teaching throughout the school.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare written case studies, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils start school with above average level of skills. Almost all pupils make good progress throughout the Foundation Phase in all areas of learning.

Pupils' literacy and communication skills are generally good across the school. Nearly all pupils listen very well to adults and other pupils' contributions. They are articulate and able to communicate successfully with adults and other pupils in a variety of contexts. Most pupils can express their opinions effectively. This is very apparent during the many opportunities they are given for group and paired work.

Most pupils throughout the school read competently for their age and stage of development. They demonstrate very good phonic skills and can decode text from an early age. By the end of key stage 2 most pupils can confidently use their reading skills successfully to access other areas of the curriculum independently.

In the nursery and reception classes, nearly all children make good progress in their early writing skills. By the end of the Foundation Phase, nearly all can confidently write creative and factual pieces of work well. They spell most common words accurately and use a good range of punctuation and sentence structures. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils write confidently for a variety of purposes and in a wide range of genres. Many of the more able pupils write at length and to a high standard.

Most pupils apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well across the curriculum. Pupils' ability to apply their thinking skills and to work independently is extremely well developed throughout the school. Progress in lessons is good throughout the school. Almost all pupils complete their work well and remain on task, showing interest and pride in their achievements.

Nearly all pupils with special educational needs achieve well against prior attainment and personal targets and make good progress relative to their ability. Pupils entitled to free school meals and those with English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve their targets.

The verified data on pupils' attainment in National Curriculum assessment in 2011 indicates that pupils performed well in English at the end of key stage 1. The percentage attaining the expected level was above the average for schools in Wales but slightly lower than for schools within the family of similar schools. There has been a slight downward trend in the results in English since 2008. However, the percentage of pupils gaining above the expected level is well above that of the family of schools and Wales in all subjects. This year, girls outperformed boys by a significant margin in both English and science.

The data for 2011 in key stage 2 places the school above the average result at level 4 for the family of schools and for schools in Wales in all subjects. The data shows that results in all subjects have been consistently good since 2006. The percentage of pupils gaining above the expected level in English is also above the average for similar schools. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in key stage 2.

Although there has been some improvement in the provision for Welsh language in recent years, pupils generally are unable to use Welsh effectively in a range of contexts outside the formal structure of the Welsh lesson. Standards achieved in lessons do not show consistency and continuity in progress and remain underdeveloped.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all, pupils feel happy and safe in school and express confidence in the care provided by staff. They show respect, care and concern for each other and relate well to their teachers, staff and visitors. They have a good understanding of how to be healthy and safe and recognise the importance of exercise and eating a healthy diet.

Nearly all pupils are highly motivated and enjoy learning. They increasingly, and enthusiastically, make choices about what they want to learn. Most pupils take pride in their work, collaborate extremely well with one another and strive to complete tasks to the best of their ability.

Standards of behaviour are good and pupils say that little or no bullying occurs. Attendance figures of 96.6% compare favourably with those of similar schools. The majority of pupils arrive punctually.

Most pupils readily take on responsibilities. Members of the school council and eco committee are actively involved in making decisions about school life and represent the views of their peers well. The school council is well established and makes positive contributions to developments at the school. Other pupil-led committees have a real influence on school life.

Pupils develop a good range of social and life skills through participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that successfully promote awareness of life outside school.

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

The school's curriculum is rich, varied and interesting. It meets the needs of all pupils very successfully. The principles and practices of the Foundation Phase are very well understood and successfully established. The introduction of these approaches into Year 2 is a model of good practice in this year group.

A stimulating enrichment programme, delivered both by school staff and specialists from outside, caters extremely well for pupils' talents and interests, particularly those related to the arts. The large school orchestra, for example, provides notable opportunities for pupils to work together to prepare and perform musical compositions. The provision for developing pupils' sports skills is proving successful and has improved as a result of the school's response to requests from pupils and parents.

Planning for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills secures clear progression from the Foundation Phase through to key stage 2. There is an excellent balance between the formal teaching of subject knowledge and related skills and the provision of opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other contexts.

The promotion of thinking skills is an integral part of all learning experiences and an outstanding feature of the school's work. This is sector-leading practice, which has a clear and direct impact on pupils' ability to learn independently.

Planning for the promotion of Welsh language skills is satisfactory. The use of incidental Welsh by staff is inconsistent and relatively underdeveloped. There is not enough challenge for pupils, particularly in key stage 2, although the short daily sessions are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' confidence in speaking Welsh. The provision for developing pupils' understanding of their Welsh heritage is good.

The school develops pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship extremely well. The eco committee actively promotes a wide range of initiatives including conservation of energy and water, litter-picking and growing seeds. Its members take their responsibilities seriously. The eco committee has contributed well to the 20% reduction in its energy bills. Many activities, such as links with a school in Nepal and fair trade events, make a positive contribution to pupils' awareness of their responsibilities as citizens of the world.

Teaching: Good

The overall quality of teaching is good. Nearly all teachers provide stimulating, interesting and varied learning experiences so that pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress. Teachers are particularly skilled at asking open and probing questions that challenge pupils to think and explain their ideas.

In many classes, the quality of teachers' planning of activities to develop pupils' thinking skills is excellent. They provide resources and structured support that are very well designed to enable pupils to read, investigate, research and learn independently.

Throughout the school, teaching assistants work very effectively with class teachers and provide good support for pupils' learning. In the Foundation Phase, there is a consistently good balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning that has a very positive impact on children's confidence and independence. All practitioners understand when to intervene and when to stand back and let children explore for themselves.

In the very few lessons that are less effective, teaching staff do not promote pupils' bilingual skills sufficiently and very occasionally there is too much teacher direction and an insufficient opportunity for pupils to work independently.

Procedures for monitoring, assessing and recording pupils' progress are very well understood and consistently implemented. A strength of the school is teachers' use of the information gained from their observations and assessments of pupils' learning to inform their planning of future learning experiences. Almost without exception, they adapt tasks very effectively to meet the needs of learners of all abilities in the class.

Teachers' marking of pupils' work is particularly good. It is often detailed and appreciative of pupils' efforts whilst also identifying points for improvement.

In the Foundation Phase, practitioners hold daily meetings to review children's learning and progress. These meetings are highly effective in developing and recording their shared understanding of the progress and needs of individual children.

Target-setting procedures are well established. Pupils review their own progress and agree their personal learning targets with their teachers, with the result that they have a clear idea about the next steps in their learning.

Procedures to moderate teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2 are good and involve colleagues in the high school. As a result, teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments are accurate.

Reports to parents give clear, detailed information about their child's progress and achievements in all subjects and areas of learning. Specific targets for improvement are included for the core subjects.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school effectively promotes pupils' health and wellbeing. Many good opportunities ensure that pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They have access to a range of equipment that encourages exercise. Members of staff consistently and effectively implement the school's agreed behaviour policy. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe in school.

Members of staff know pupils very well and there are good procedures to monitor and support their progress, social development and personal welfare. The school seeks the views of pupils through the school council, suggestion boxes and questionnaires. The school take pupils' views seriously and act upon them whenever possible.

Learning experiences, including assemblies, very effectively promote pupils' spiritual and moral development. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to work and learn together, and the school develops pupils' social skills very well. There is a rich provision for pupils' cultural development.

The school makes very effective use of a wide range of outside agencies and specialist services, including those provided by the local authority, to support pupils with specific needs.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

There are good procedures and systems for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs. Teaching assistants provide effective intervention in classes, with occasional withdrawal for additional support. Individual education plans are appropriate and are regularly evaluated and updated, in consultation with parents. Pupils with special educational needs make very good use of child friendly individual educational plans. The school identifies more able and talented pupils and provision for them is good.

Learning environment: Good

The school has an ethos that values learning and achievement. It is an inclusive community, where all pupils enjoy equal access to the wealth of opportunities that it offers. Whole school assemblies make a very good contribution to promoting respect for individuality, diversity and appreciation of pupils' talents. Pupils and staff fully understand the strategies to prevent and eliminate oppressive behaviour such as bullying and racism. The school implements these well.

The grounds and outside areas are attractive, well utilised to enhance pupils' learning and maintained to a good standard. Throughout the school, displays help provide a stimulating, learning environment. The fabric of the building in some classrooms and corridors in key stage 2 is poor. However, staff make very efficient use of all available space and do not allow the building's deficiencies to have a negative impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school has a good range of resources, which are used well to promote learning and teaching.

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

The headteacher communicates a strong sense of purpose and direction to the work of the school. She successfully shares her vision with the governors, the leadership team and all the staff. The leadership team successfully promotes good quality teaching and learning at all levels. Regular team meetings focus well on moving forward the school's priorities as well as dealing with day to day issues. Responsibility for monitoring and evaluating standards and teaching is well organised through a system of distributed leadership. All staff have high expectations of pupils and are focused on raising standards and in making new initiatives work.

The governors are well informed about all aspects of the school's work and are fully involved in the self-evaluation process. They consider data on school performance carefully and challenge the school where appropriate. The governing body fully meets its responsibilities.

The school works hard to address national and local priorities. It has very successfully implemented the Foundation Phase. It is productively involved in partnership working and has established a number of professional learning communities. The development of thinking skills across the school, for example, has had a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning. However, the school has not made sufficient progress in developing pupils' bilingual skills.

Improving quality: Good

The school has extensive and effective self-evaluation procedures, which involve all stakeholders by seeking the views of all staff, parents, pupils and governors. Subject leaders regularly monitor their subjects by reviewing policies, teachers' planning and other relevant documents. They scrutinise pupils' work and accurately track and record pupils' achievements and progress.

The school gathers evidence, shares relevant information and analyses data extensively within specific staff meetings. The senior management team and subject leaders are involved in regular classroom observations.

The school's self-evaluation report is evaluative and is effective in highlighting the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school development plan is a detailed document, which clearly sets out the school's priorities as identified from the self-evaluation process. The plan lists the tasks to be undertaken, allocates responsibilities, sets success criteria and recognises appropriate training needs.

Members of staff participate fully in networks of professional practice. Both the development and organisation of the Foundation Phase, and the provision of the forest school, are strengths of the school. It has shared aspects of these with other schools within the local authority and further afield.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership with parents is generally good. The school liaises well with parents and carers, many of whom give their time to support the school. It also uses the local business community and other organisations effectively to extend pupils' learning experiences.

The school has established purposeful procedures to ensure a smooth transition for pupils to the next stage of their education. It has created effective partnerships with the local secondary school and other schools in the area. These partnerships impact well on the quality of learning

The school benefits from well established links with the University in Cardiff and with officers from the local authority.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources well. It effectively deploys all teaching and support staff. Very good use is made of the expertise of members of staff and of outside providers to enhance and enrich pupils' experience.

Teachers plan together during their planning, preparation and assessment time and also use this time to brief teaching assistants. This successfully ensures that there is consistency within year groups.

The school is equipped with an extensive range of good quality resources and makes the best use it can of the building.

The headteacher and governing body regularly scrutinise the school's budget. They allocate funds appropriately to priorities within the school development plan. The school robustly measures impact on attainment and standards. It makes full use of the available funds and keeps reasonable sums in reserve.

The school succeeds in securing good outcomes for pupils. It therefore offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The verified data on key stage 1 pupils' attainment in National Curriculum assessment in 2011 indicates that pupils performed at a higher level than the average for schools in Wales in all subjects. However, the school's results were below those of the family of schools (a group of schools with similar characteristics) in English oracy and reading and similar to those of the family in mathematics. The school's result in science was above the family average.

When benchmarked against schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school is amongst the lower 50% of schools in respect of all three individual core subjects and amongst the higher 50% in the core subject indicator (the expected performance in the core subjects in combination).

There has been a slight downward trend in English at Level 2 from 97% in 2008 to 93% this year. The results for mathematics and science have remained at above 95% throughout with science reaching 100% in 2008 and 2010.

This year, the percentage of pupils attaining beyond the expected level was higher than the average for the family of schools and Wales in all three core subjects. The girls' performance was significantly better than that of the boys in both English and science.

At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in English and science was above the averages for the family of schools and for Wales, and similar to the family average in mathematics.

When benchmarked against schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the results placed the school amongst the higher 50% in all subjects and in the core subject indicator.

The percentage of pupils attaining beyond the expected level was above the average for the family of schools and Wales this year in English, but below family and above Wales averages in both mathematics and science.

The results have been consistently good over the last five years. In nearly all cases, the core subjects and the core subject indicator have been in the higher 50% when benchmarked against the results of similar schools. There has been no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in key stage 2.

Nearly all pupils with special educational needs achieve well against prior attainment and personal targets and make good progress relative to their ability. Pupils entitled to free school meals and those with English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve their targets.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

One hundred and twenty-nine questionnaires were returned, and in each one all of the parents stated that they felt that the school offers a good range of activities including trips and visits.

Nearly all of the parents that responded agree that the children are making good progress at school, that teaching is good and that staff expect children to work hard and do their best. They believe that pupils behave well in school and like to attend.

Most parents agree that the children are safe in school. They also believe that pupils are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise and that the school helps the children to become more mature and take on responsibility. They feel that children were helped to settle well when they started at school and that the school is well run.

Many believe that they are kept well informed about the children's progress and that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints and are comfortable about approaching the school with any problem.

Responses to learner questionnaires

The questionnaire was completed by 63 key stage 2 pupils, and members of the inspection team spoke to pupils during their time at the school. All of the pupils that responded feel that they are doing well at school.

Nearly all pupils feel secure in school, and that the teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress.

Most pupils feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and that they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard. They know whom to talk to if worried or upset.

A majority of the pupils state that the school deals well with bullying and that other children behave well.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Mary Dyas	Team Inspector
Stephanie James	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Jeremy Phillips	Peer Inspector
Carolyn Evans	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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11