



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

**Capcoch Primary School
School Street
Abercwmboi
Aberdare
CF44 6AD**

Date of inspection: February 2013

by

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



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

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

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

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

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Capcoch Primary School is in Abercwmboi, in the Cynon Valley between Aberdare and Mountain Ash. Nearly all pupils live locally with a very few coming from the surrounding area. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. The area has both privately owned and rented homes and is designated a Communities First Area. Around 40% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is above local and national averages and has risen steadily for the last four years.

There are currently 134 pupils on roll including 30 in the nursery class. There are seven classes including two specialist classes for pupils from across the local authority. One is for pupils with hearing impairment and the other for pupils with speech and language difficulties. The school has six full time teachers and four part time teachers. They are assisted by six full time and four part time learning support staff. The school admits pupils to the nursery class at the age of three.

The school has currently no pupils who are 'looked after' by the local authority or who receive support for English as an additional language. The school identifies that around 20% of pupils have additional learning needs and a very few pupils have a statement of special educational need. English is the main home language of most pupils. Very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background and almost no pupils use Welsh as their first language. No pupils were excluded within the last year.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2009 and the deputy headteacher in September 2012.

The individual school budget per pupil for Capcoch Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £4,946 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £6,197 and the minimum is £2,561. Capcoch Primary School is sixth out of the 113 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall judgement on the school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve well;
- nearly all teaching is good or better;
- staff mark and assess pupils' work very effectively; and
- pupils are developing very well their ability to improve their own work.

Prospects for improvement

The overall judgement for the prospects for improvement of the provider are excellent because:

- the headteacher provides very clear and highly effective leadership;
- the school has robust self-evaluation procedures;
- the school has used its links with its family to make significant improvements to pupils' standards of achievement and wellbeing' and on parental involvement in their children's learning;
- the school targets improvements effectively; and
- there is a highly effective recent track-record of raising standards and improving provision.

Recommendations

R1 Raise pupils' standards of reading

R2 Improve pupils' use of the Welsh language outside of Welsh lessons

R3 Improve attendance

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Over the last three years pupils' standards of achievement have risen significantly when compared to other schools. Most pupils enter the school with skills below those expected of pupils of a similar age. By the time they leave the school, they have made good progress in their learning and achieve well.

Most pupils listen carefully in class. They pay careful attention to what staff say and reply to questions confidently. Older pupils interview visitors enthusiastically and use a good range of questions to find information. Most pupils in the resource provision classes communicate well especially when asking questions of each other and of staff.

In lessons, most pupils write well for a range of purposes and audiences. In the Foundation Phase they make quick progress in being able to write letters, words and sentences. Many pupils have a good understanding of letter sounds and names. This helps them to spell common words well and to make an accurate guess at more difficult words. Handwriting is generally very good. Most pupils shape their letters properly and present their work neatly.

In key stage 2, pupils build well on these skills and use their writing effectively to explain their thoughts and ideas in all subjects. By the end of this key stage many pupils write legibly in a well formed cursive style. They use a wide and interesting vocabulary and more able pupils apply a good range of different styles of writing well to engage the reader. Overall, many pupils spell accurately and use punctuation correctly.

Most pupils have adequate standards of reading. Pupils in the Foundation Phase use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to read simple words and make sensible guesses at more difficult ones. Across the school, nearly all pupils read fluently but make limited use of expression or punctuation. They have a general understanding of what they read, but are not able to explain well enough what may happen next in a story or why characters behave in certain ways. Few pupils read regularly for pleasure or talk confidently about the books or authors they like. Most can use a dictionary appropriately. Many Year 6 pupils can quickly skim a text to pick out its main points or use the internet to find information successfully.

Pupils' generally apply their numeracy skills well in subjects other than mathematics. It is particularly good in Year 5 and Year 6 where pupils are involved in the effective analysis and interpretation of data in science. Most pupils, from the nursery class onwards, use information and communication technology (ICT) very well. They apply their understanding and knowledge of ICT very effectively in all subjects. Pupils use a range of equipment appropriately, including audio and visual recordings, to enhance the quality and presentation of their work.

Most pupils who have extra help with their learning, including those in the resource provision classes, do well and make good progress. Those pupils who have free school meals generally achieve as well as other pupils. Most more able pupils achieve highly. The low numbers of boys and girls in each year group make comparisons of their achievements unreliable.

Most pupils enjoy learning Welsh and make sound progress in their use of the language. They understand the Welsh used by staff well. A minority of pupils speak Welsh confidently in lessons. Their Welsh pronunciation is good. By the end of Year 6, many pupils read familiar passages clearly and the majority show adequate understanding of the text. Few pupils use their Welsh language skills effectively outside of Welsh lessons.

Due to the small number of pupils on occasions, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care because one pupil's results can have a significant impact on school performance.

In 2012, pupil outcomes in the end of Foundation Phase assessments were below those of similar schools (school whose pupils receive a similar percentage of free school meals). When compared other schools in its family (those schools that face similar challenges) the school's performance was slightly higher than expected.

In 2012, pupil outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were very good and there is a rising trend of improvement over the last four years. For both the expected level 4 and the higher level 5, the school was consistently in the top 25% of similar schools. Pupil outcomes were often the best in the family.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. They are motivated, and want to do their work well. In lessons they begin work quickly and stay on task for long periods. Their behaviour is good. Most pupils work effectively on their own or in groups to solve problems. Their ability to improve their own learning, especially in Year 5 and Year 6 is a real strength. These pupils, in particular, have highly developed skills in understanding what they are doing well in their work and in choosing the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in the school and understand the importance of healthy eating and living. Many pupils participate keenly in the extra-curricular activities on offer to them.

The school council has helped purchase a good range of outdoor apparatus and equipment that pupils make good use of at break times. They have also developed class rules on behaviour.

Many pupils take on additional responsibilities and perform their duties effectively. Most pupils take part in community activities such as litter picking, helping with the creation of a community garden, and planting trees in the local area. These help give pupils a sense of pride in their locality.

Most pupils arrive punctually. After a steady rise for three years, the school's attendance rate fell in 2012, and at around 93%, is in the lower half when compared to those of similar schools.

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

The school provides a good range of interesting learning experiences that meet the needs of all pupils, including those in resource provision classes. Staff, in the Foundation Phase particularly, work well together to plan innovative programmes of learning. The broad and balanced curriculum builds systematically on what pupils know and can do. The wide range of extra-curricular activities support the taught curriculum effectively.

All teachers offer pupils good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and for them to write independently in different styles and for different audiences. However, there are too few opportunities in the school day for pupils to read on their own or in groups. This limits their progress in becoming highly-skilled readers. Provision for pupils' numeracy and ICT skills is good.

In lessons, provision for Welsh language is good. Staff speak Welsh regularly and encourage pupils to make use of Welsh reading resources independently. Good use is made of the local area and its people, such as a local artist and visits to Cardiff and a Welsh heritage mining museum, to help pupils gain a good understanding of the culture and history of Wales.

Provision for pupils to learn about environmental issues such as recycling and saving energy is appropriate. Pupils have suitable opportunities to learn about other countries and their cultures.

Teaching: Good

Nearly all teaching is good and in a very few lessons it is excellent. In most lessons teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. They challenge pupils successfully and inspire them to do well. They prepare interesting and engaging activities and manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Teachers use skilful questioning and use high-quality resources to help pupils understand more clearly what they are learning. Additional adults in the classroom give very good support to pupils and teachers.

In a few lessons teachers do not keep the pace of the lesson high enough or allow pupils enough time to think about their answers before they respond to questions.

Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly. They give them good feedback on what they have done well and on what they need to do next to improve. In all classes, staff involve pupils successfully in assessing their own and others' work. In the very best practice, staff include pupils extensively in the evaluation of their own work and in contributing to lesson planning and target setting.

Staff track pupils' performance and wellbeing effectively and use this information well to identify how pupils' can be best helped and supported. Their assessment and moderation of pupils' work at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 is secure. Parents receive good quality reports about their child's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has good provision for pupils' health and wellbeing, spiritual, moral cultural and social development. The school promotes punctuality and regular attendance strongly. There are thorough and effective policies to promote good behaviour and discourage bullying.

The school works well with a good range of specialist agencies to support the emotional, behavioural, physical and educational needs of pupils, especially those in the resource provision classes. These arrangements contribute well to pupils' development and wellbeing and support their learning effectively.

Provision for all pupils with additional learning needs is effective and they make good progress in school. Well-trained support staff offer a high level of help to individuals and small groups of pupils. The school keeps parents well informed and involved in any decisions about their child.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school is a harmonious and friendly place. Staff create a very positive, supportive, and caring ethos where every member of the school community feels valued. All pupils have equal access to all areas of learning and provision. Pupils in the resource provision classes and mainstream classes benefit from good opportunities to work alongside each other.

There have been significant changes to the premises over the last three years leading to a safer and more secure learning environment. The school buildings are well maintained with bright, well equipped classrooms. The outdoor environment has been transformed and now provides a high quality play area for the whole school. Generally, resources are of good quality and matched well to pupils' needs.

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

The headteacher provides high quality leadership and management to the school. Over the last three years his dedicated work has resulted in pupils making significant progress in their learning and in marked changes to the school's building and resources. He and the recently established leadership team have a clear vision for school improvement that is shared by all.

The leadership team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities but as yet the initiatives they have introduced have had limited impact. Good relationships between staff have a positive effect on the whole learning environment.

Governors are informed suitably about the school's performance. They use this information appropriately to help set the school's strategic direction and challenge underperformance. They fulfil their legal and statutory duties effectively.

Policies and initiatives, including those that meet local and national priorities, are implemented consistently, leading to improvements in these areas especially in tackling social disadvantage.

Improving quality: Excellent

The process of self-evaluation and school development planning is a very important and regular part of the school's working life. The senior leadership team has a very clear picture of the school's performance. There is a wide range of rigorous self-evaluation activities, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and a robust analysis of data.

The information gathered is used very effectively to produce a clear and detailed school improvement plan focussing on pupil outcomes. Priorities for improvement are clear and measurable and have appropriate costs, timescales and resources allocated to them. Leaders monitor initiatives extensively and review progress very rigorously against the targets set.

The school has made outstanding use of its family to challenge its own performance and raise standards significantly. Originated by the headteacher, the school has met regularly with its family to assess how well it doing and to take on examples of best-practice from other schools. The initiatives introduced to the school have had a very significant impact on raising pupils' standards of achievement and wellbeing, and on parental involvement in their children's learning.

Through working with local schools on three projects the school has successfully begun to address standards in science and boys' achievement, and improve links between primary and secondary education.

Partnership working: Good

The school has effective partnerships within the local community and with a range of agencies and services that support pupils' wellbeing and help raise their standards of achievement.

Links with local secondary school are good and enable pupils to transfer there smoothly. A partnership with a local business has provided financial and practical support in redesigning and resourcing the outdoor areas to the school. Links with a local professional football club have helped develop pupils' skills and their attitudes to healthy lifestyles.

Partnerships with parents have developed strongly through initiatives introduced by the school. Parents have pride in the school and their children's work. The school has improved the quality and regularity of newsletters to parents. It also uses a range of social media successfully to keep parents involved and informed. There are a range of classes held in the school for parents, such as Welsh language and

fitness. These encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school and take a greater interest in their child's education. A parents' fund-raising group has been established and is well supported.

Resource management: Good

The headteacher and governing body manage the school budget highly effectively to get the best returns from funding. School spending decisions are linked well to priorities for improvement.

There is an appropriate level of staffing. Leaders deploy staff well to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively and that staff make best use of their time, expertise and experience. The school makes good use of performance management procedures and staff appraisal to plan training. This has had good impact, for example, in developing staff skills in Welsh alongside those of the pupils.

In view of pupils' improving standards and good leadership, the school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Most pupils enter the school with skills below those expected of pupils of a similar age. By the time they leave the school, they have made good progress in their learning and achieve well.

In 2012, pupil outcomes in the end of Foundation Phase assessments were below those of similar schools (school whose pupils receive a similar percentage of free school meals). For the expected outcome 5, results place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools for language, literacy and communication and in the lowest 25% of similar schools for mathematical development, personal, social and cultural development and for the Foundation Phase indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected outcome 5 in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and personal, social and cultural development in combination). For the higher outcome 6, the school was in the lower 50% of similar schools for language, literacy and communication, and personal, social and cultural development and in the lowest 25% for mathematical development.

When compared to other schools in its family (those schools that face similar challenges) the school performs slightly higher than expected.

In 2012, pupil outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were very good and there is a rising trend of improvement over the last four years. For both the expected level 4 and the higher level 5, the school was in the top 25% of similar schools for English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level in English, mathematics and science in combination).

When compared to other school in its family, results of 2012 assessments were very good. For the expected level 4, the school was the highest performing in the family for the core subject indicator and English, third best in mathematics and fourth in science. For the higher level 5, the school was consistently the highest performing school.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Response to parents' and carers' questionnaire

Nineteen parents or carers responded to the questionnaire.

Most parents are satisfied with the school and think that:

- 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;
- homework builds well on what pupils learn in school;
- their child is well prepared for moving on to high school;
- they are comfortable approaching the school if they have a problem;
- staff treat all pupils equally and with respect.
- pupils behave well in school;
- the school helps children to settle in well; and
- there is a good range of trips or visits.

In most cases the parents' and carers' responses are similar to those of other primary schools across Wales.

Response to pupil questionnaire.

Fifty-seven pupils responded to the questionnaire.

Almost all thinks 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 in class and at breaktime and lunchtimes.

The views of pupils are more positive about their school than pupils in other schools in Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Richard Hawkey	Reporting Inspector
Enir Morgan	Team Inspector
Pauline Preston	Team Inspector
Ivor Petherick	Lay Inspector
Sarah Louise Rees	Peer Inspector
Stephen Gardner	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.