



*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**

**Coedpenmaen County Primary School  
Coedpenmaen Close  
Pontypridd  
RCT  
CF37 4LE**

**Date of inspection: April 2012**

**by**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Context

Coedpenmaen County Primary School is situated in Pontypridd in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. Most pupils live locally, but a few pupils come from the surrounding area. Just over 20 pupils transfer to the school each year from Trallwng Infant School at the start of key stage 2. The school provides education for pupils between three and eleven years of age. There are currently 272 pupils on roll, including 20 full-time pupils in the nursery.

Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and the area the school serves is neither economically advantaged nor disadvantaged. Around 16% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is just below local and national averages. A very few pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority. Around 13% of pupils have additional learning needs and a very few pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnic origin and speak English at home. A very few pupils have English as an additional language, but all of these pupils speak English competently. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Pupils are taught through the medium of English and the school teaches Welsh as a second language.

The headteacher was appointed in April 2010.

The individual school budget per pupil for Coedpenmaen County Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £2,789 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £6,499 and the minimum is £2,788. Coedpenmaen County Primary School is 100th 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>Adequate</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the school is adequate. This is because:

- most pupils develop good speaking and listening skills and many write well in English lessons;
- standards of wellbeing are high; staff provide good care, support and guidance and make sure that pupils feel happy and safe in school;
- teaching in many lessons is good and most pupils respond positively to the learning activities available to them; and
- classrooms and other areas are stimulating environments that motivate pupils' learning effectively.

However:

- although standards in English and mathematics have improved steadily, outcomes for eleven-year-old pupils over the past four years have not been good enough; and
- newly-introduced planning for developing pupils' skills has not been in place long enough to have improved pupils' ability to use their skills across the curriculum.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate. This is because:

- all staff share common values and have clear aims for school improvement that generally focus appropriately on the needs of pupils;
- senior leaders use a good variety of evaluative, first-hand evidence to identify the school's strengths and priorities for improvement accurately; and
- recent school improvement planning has resulted in higher standards in specific areas, particularly speaking and listening and extended writing in English.

However:

- governors do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to supporting senior leaders and challenging the school's performance; and
- communication with parents and carers is not always effective enough to secure their full support and commitment.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in science and Welsh;
- R2 improve pupils' ability to apply their skills across the curriculum;
- R3 match learning activities accurately to pupils' abilities;
- R4 develop governors' understanding of their responsibilities and their role as a critical friend;
- R5 strengthen communication and partnerships with parents and carers; and
- R6 sustain recent improvements in attendance.

### **What happens next?**

The school will draw up an action plan showing how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

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

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

Most pupils enter the school with average basic and social skills. By the age of seven, many make appropriate progress and achieve similar standards to pupils in other, similar schools in English, mathematics and science. Outcomes for pupils at the age of 11 have not been good enough for the past four years. However, they have improved steadily and, in 2011, results in mathematics and English were broadly average, when compared to those in similar schools. However this is not the case in science, where pupils do not achieve well enough.

Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. More able pupils in the Foundation Phase do not always make good enough progress, but many more able eleven-year-olds achieve very well, and a few exceptionally well, in English,. Pupils who are entitled to free school meals do not usually achieve as well as other pupils, but their outcomes are in line with the performance of this group of pupils in other, similar schools. Pupils from ethnic minorities and those with English as an additional language do as well as, and often better than, other groups of pupils. The gap in performance between boys and girls is similar to the national picture and is closing in key stage 2.

Most pupils make expected progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills in English and mathematics lessons, although many do not apply these skills independently and to a similar standard across the curriculum. Most pupils listen attentively and respond appropriately, exploring ideas sensibly in pairs before sharing them effectively with others. Many key stage 2 pupils organise and express their thoughts well.

Most pupils make appropriate progress in reading and, by the age of 11, read fluently, using punctuation well to aid their expression. Although many pupils use their knowledge of letter-sound relationships well to read unfamiliar words, their use of other reading strategies is less well developed. This sometimes prevents them from understanding texts as well as they should. Pupils' knowledge of a range of authors is limited, but most enjoy discussing books in group reading sessions. Many pupils use contents and index pages correctly and the more able scan and skim texts confidently to find information. However, pupils' independent research skills, using books and information and communication technology, are not as strong.

Many pupils write well in English lessons. Overall, their work is well structured, and spelling, punctuation and handwriting are good. Those who are more able often write imaginatively and at considerable length. Despite this, very few pupils demonstrate that they can apply their good writing skills effectively in other subjects. Similarly, although many older pupils use their thinking skills well to analyse texts in English lessons, they do not demonstrate the same level of thinking and enquiry in science and other subjects.

Young children in the Foundation Phase make good progress in their early understanding and use of Welsh. They respond correctly to instructions and develop an appropriate vocabulary linked to their topics. However, this progress is not maintained as pupils move through the school. In key stage 2, pupils read and write simple sentences based on the oral language they know, but they cannot sustain a conversation confidently and speak very little Welsh around the school.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils understand the importance of healthy eating, drinking water and keeping fit. Although a minority of pupils raised concerns about a few issues of wellbeing in the pupil questionnaire, most say that they feel safe in school and are confident in the processes that are in place to help them resolve any problems. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They display good social skills, collaborate well with others and are polite and courteous. Standards of behaviour are good and there is a positive working atmosphere in all lessons.

Many pupils take on responsibility maturely and play an effective part in school life. School council members are keen to introduce new ideas and they contribute appropriately to decision-making. Most pupils are aware of their strengths and what they need to do to improve their work. They pay good attention to comments made in teachers' marking of their work.

Attendance, at just over 92 %, is below average for the family of schools and has been in the lower half of that of schools with similar levels of free school meals for the last four years. However, attendance has improved this year and is currently nearly 94%. This represents a significant improvement on previous years.

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

The overall judgement for Key Question 2 is higher than that for Key Question 1 because the good features identified in the school's provision have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on pupils' standards.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of many pupils appropriately. Learning experiences provided for Foundation Phase pupils are varied and stimulating. In key stage 2, a progressive planning framework provides effective guidance for teachers to prepare relevant and interesting activities to develop pupils' skills systematically. However, this framework is very new and it has not yet had an impact on standards in skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to carry out investigations in science and consequently their thinking and enquiry skills are underdeveloped.

Provision for education for sustainable development is good. Pupils learn about the need to conserve, re-use and recycle and the school acts sustainably. Subject co-ordinators ensure that teachers plan regularly to develop pupils' understanding of environmental issues. Pupils have interesting opportunities to learn about global citizenship through their links with Africa and by working alongside student teachers from Germany.

There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about the geography and history of Wales. Wall displays celebrate the work of Welsh artists and musicians well and the curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest. However, provision for Welsh does not ensure that pupils use the language enough beyond their Welsh lessons.

Key stage 2 pupils have access to a suitable range of after-school activities.

### **Teaching: Good**

The overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and organise their classes effectively. They manage pupils' behaviour well and provide stimulating working environments that promote and support good learning. Most teachers use a good balance of class, group and individual teaching and set appropriate time limits to ensure that lessons maintain good pace. Nearly all teachers and support staff ask effective questions that encourage pupils to extend their understanding. However, in a minority of lessons, planned activities do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils and do not encourage pupils to work independently enough.

There are comprehensive arrangements for assessing pupils' achievements and for tracking and analysing their progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give good written and oral feedback. Along with pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress and that of others, this is a good feature that enables many pupils to contribute effectively to improving their own learning.

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

The secure and supportive ethos of the school provides pupils with a clear understanding of rules, procedures and expectations. The school is successful in promoting the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, promoted by daily acts of collective worship and effective curriculum opportunities. All pupils have good opportunities to develop their cultural awareness through activities such as regular specialist music lessons, theatre visits and involvement in eisteddfodau. Although the school's recent focus on attendance has brought about an improvement, procedures for monitoring attendance have not been rigorous enough in the past.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Teachers identify pupils' needs promptly and the special educational needs co-ordinator organises and oversees any necessary support efficiently. She liaises closely with external support agencies and makes good use of the specialist services, information and guidance on offer. Support staff work closely with teachers to provide a good range of support programmes for individuals and groups of pupils. These have had a positive impact on raising pupils' standards, particularly in reading in the Foundation Phase.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is characterised by a calm, purposeful atmosphere, in which all pupils are included and valued. The ethos of the school and the curriculum encourages pupils



to develop tolerance, respect and understanding. The ease of access to all parts of the building and playground means that all pupils are fully involved in all aspects of school life.

There are plenty of appropriate resources in most classrooms and staff use them effectively. The accommodation is of good quality and teachers use all available space creatively. The indoor learning environment is enhanced by interesting, informative displays and pupils' work and most outside areas provide a pleasant environment in which pupils can play and learn effectively. However, the main entrance and administrative area of the school does not provide a welcoming environment for parents and visitors.

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

All staff share common values and have clear aims for school improvement that generally focus appropriately on the needs of pupils and on raising standards. Managers emphasise the importance of shared leadership and this secures the full involvement of all staff. Teachers and support staff understand their roles and responsibilities well and senior leaders support them in developing their expertise in order to guide others and manage change. There are appropriate systems and structures in place to ensure that staff and leadership meetings focus closely on the school's priorities.

Governors' understanding of their roles and responsibilities is at an early stage of development. The headteacher provides governors with a good range of information about the school's performance and its priorities for improvement, but governing body meetings do not focus closely enough on this core business. As a result, the governing body does not fulfil its role in supporting and challenging the school well enough.

The school pays good attention to local and national priorities, especially in relation to improving literacy and numeracy and tackling poverty and disadvantage.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Senior leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Self-evaluation draws on a good range of first-hand evidence, including careful analysis of data, evaluative lesson observations, annual subject reviews and focused scrutiny of pupils' work. The school development plan is a useful working document that identifies specific, measurable targets closely linked to pupil outcomes. Individuals understand their responsibilities in relation to school improvement and carry out their work in this area conscientiously. The school has responded well to a recent local authority review. This, along with the school development plan, has resulted in improvements in several areas of the curriculum, such as extended writing in English and better consistency in teaching and assessment in the Foundation Phase.

The school seeks the views of parents and pupils regularly through questionnaires, the school council and suggestion boxes. The school has made several important improvements to its practice as a direct result of these consultations. For example, it introduced a new reward system, including the use of 'golden time', as a result of pupil and parent opinions. This has reduced incidents of poor behaviour significantly.

Involvement in several professional networks, including a writing project with the local cluster of schools, supports staff's professional development well. Monitoring of the impact of innovations resulting from this professional networking such as pupils' use of specific language resources, improves teachers' evaluative and reflective skills and ensures that they analyse successes and failures effectively.

### **Partnership working: Adequate**

The school has effective links with a relevant range of partners and these make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Collaboration in planning and resourcing with the feeder infant school and others in the cluster ensures common approaches to important elements of the curriculum, including the teaching of phonics and the development of pupils' assessment of skills. These joint working practices contribute effectively to pupil progress and ensure smooth transition between schools.

The majority of parents are supportive of the school's work and understand the importance of working together for the benefit of pupils' standards and wellbeing. However, negative comments in the pre-inspection parent questionnaire indicate that partnerships and communication with parents are not always effective enough to secure the full support and commitment of all parents.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The school manages its staff and financial resources well. Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively and this helps to improve provision and raise standards. Spending focuses appropriately on school improvement priorities and senior leaders review the effectiveness of new resources regularly to ensure that they provide good value for money. The school's performance management system is appropriate and recently introduced procedures to improve professional development opportunities for support staff are effective in raising their expectations.

Although standards have improved gradually, particularly at the end of key stage 2, outcomes for pupils over the last few years and adequate standards overall mean that the school provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Although pupil performance is improving, standards overall in Coedpenmaen County Primary School in 2011 were below those of schools with a similar percentage of free school meals. Pupils' attainment was largely similar to that of pupils in other schools in the local authority and in Wales.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are broadly average for pupils of the same age. By the end of key stage 1, they generally attain similarly to pupils in the school's family. By the end of key stage 2, standards are around the family average in mathematics and English, but below average in science and the core subject indicator.

At the end of key stage 1 in 2011, when compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, Coedpenmaen County Primary School was in the lower 50% in all areas. Results fell from levels achieved in previous years. The performance of more able pupils placed the school in the upper 50% of schools for mathematics, the lower 50% in English and the lowest 25% for science.

Trends at key stage 2 over recent years show improvements in English and mathematics. However, in 2011, results of pupils in key stage 2 remain in the lowest 25% of similar schools in science and in the lower 50% for the core subject indicator, English and mathematics. The performance of more able pupils achieving level 5 placed the school in the highest 25% of schools in English, the upper 50% for mathematics and the lower 50% for science.

In common with similar schools, pupils in both key stages who are entitled to free school meals do less well than those who do not receive free school meals. The gap is around the average for the school's family. Boys generally do less well than girls, but the gap is reducing for older pupils.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaire

Fifty-three parents completed the questionnaire.

Nearly all parents feel that their children like the school.

Most parents think that their children:

- are safe at school;
- were helped to settle in well when they started at the school;
- are making good progress;
- are encouraged to take regular exercise; and
- receive appropriate additional support for their particular needs.

Most also believe that:

- staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best; and
- teaching is good.

In many questions, the views of parents at Coedpenmaen County Primary School were significantly less positive than those of parents in similar schools across Wales. The most noticeable differences related to how well parents thought the school was run, their satisfaction with the school overall, and whether parents believed staff treated pupils fairly and with respect.

A minority of parents had concerns about:

- approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems;
- the school's procedures for dealing with complaints;
- the behaviour of pupils; and
- how well their child was prepared for moving on to the next school.

#### Responses to pupil questionnaires

One hundred pupils from key stage 2 completed the questionnaire.

All pupils think that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. However, a few pupils feel that homework does not help them to understand and improve their school work.

Nearly all pupils say that:

- the school teaches them how to be healthy; and
- they know whom to ask if they find their work hard.

Most pupils agree that they:

- feel safe in school;
- know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- have lots of chances for regular exercise;
- are doing well at school; and
- have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

In the following cases, the views of pupils at Coedpenmaen were significantly less positive than those in similar schools across Wales.

A minority of pupils think that:

- the school does not deal well enough with any bullying; and
- a few pupils do not behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Around a half of pupils comment that other children do not behave well and sometimes prevent them from getting their class-work done.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Sarah Morgan	Reporting Inspector
Stephanie James	Team Inspector
Rhiannon Boardman	Lay Inspector
Chris Dolby	Peer Inspector
Jonathan Rigby (Headteacher)	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.