



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

**Melin Infant School
Melin
Herbert Road
Neath
SA11 2DD**

Date of inspection: January 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 date: 19/03/2013

Context

Melin Infants School is in the Melincryddan district of Neath. The local authority is Neath Port Talbot. The school serves the local area where there is a high degree of social and economic disadvantage. There are 134 full-time equivalent pupils aged between three and seven years on roll including 42 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis.

The school has identified 48% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, including a very few with statements of special educational needs. Approximately 46% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the local authority and all Wales average. A few pupils are looked after by the local authority. No pupil was excluded in the previous 12 months. Nearly all pupils are from white British backgrounds. No pupil has Welsh as the language of the home. About 5% of pupils have English as an additional language.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the staffing of the school which have included the appointment of new headteacher in September 2007 and deputy headteacher in January 2012.

The individual school budget per pupil for Melin Infant School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,500 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £7,410 and the minimum is £2,806. Melin Infant School is 35th out of the 68 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of Melin Infants School is good because:

- the achievement and progress of pupils are strong features;
- pupils' wellbeing and positive attitudes to learning are very positive;
- a wide and interesting curriculum promotes pupils' learning effectively;
- consistently good teaching contributes to the good progress pupils make; and
- there is effective support for a wide range of additional learning needs across the school.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is detailed, well-established and effective planning for improvement;
- the school improvement plan is focused on improving standards and wellbeing;
- the staff's commitment to continuous improvement is raising standards;
- the school's strengths and areas for improvement are accurately identified; and
- the purposeful leadership of the headteacher and senior staff focuses well on raising standards.

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' standards in Welsh and its use in the daily life of the school

R2 Extend the school's assessment for learning strategies to increase pupils' awareness of how they should improve their work

R3 Improve the way the governing body judges the impact of its decisions and challenges the school as 'critical friend'

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils use and apply their key skills well across the curriculum. On entry to the Foundation Phase, many pupils have poor speaking and listening skills. As they move through the school, all pupils develop the ability to listen attentively and courteously to staff and each other. Across the Foundation Phase, most pupils ask questions that are relevant to their tasks and respond sensibly to the contribution of others.

The standard of reading of nearly all pupils is appropriate to their age and ability and they read a wide range of material with increasing confidence. Most pupils are familiar with a range of reading strategies and use them well when reading and listening to stories. They read aloud fluently with increasing accuracy, emphasis and expression.

Most pupils' writing skills develop well and many write independently with increasing accuracy and fluency. Spelling becomes increasingly accurate with most pupils making good use of their knowledge of letter sounds. They make good progress with handwriting and their presentation of work.

Most pupils apply their numeracy and information and communication (ICT) skills securely in a range of contexts. The thinking skills of most pupils and their ability to work independently are good.

Most pupils make adequate progress within specific Welsh lessons. However, their use of the language in more informal situations and in other curricular areas is less well developed.

In the pupil assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, standards were high in language, literacy and communication and in mathematical development. In these areas of learning, performance was above that of nearly all of the schools in its family of similar schools and above local and national averages both at outcome 5 and above and at the higher outcome (6 and above).

In personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development at both of these levels, outcomes were close to most schools in the family and above local and national averages. The combined outcomes also above these averages.

When compared to the performance levels of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the overall outcomes were in the top 25%. The outcomes in language, literacy and communication and mathematical development were very high.

Bearing in mind the lower than expected starting points of many pupils, nearly all make good progress. Those who are entitled to free school meals outperform those

who are not. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve well. Nearly all meet the targets set for them as do nearly all of those who have English as an additional language.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and show keen interest in their activities. Behaviour in classes and throughout the school is very good. Pupils are courteous and polite and demonstrate great respect for each other. They have positive attitudes to learning and engage fully in all activities. From a young age, pupils are regularly involved in making decisions about their life in the school through the school council and eco committee.

There is a strong community spirit in the school and pupils are very actively involved in community events. Pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy very good supportive relationships with staff. They have a good understanding of keeping fit and healthy. They learn the importance of healthy eating, keeping safe and having regular exercise. Through participation in a wide variety of community events, pupils develop a good range of social and life skills.

Overall, pupils' attendance is 92.6% which is in line with similar schools and local and national averages. The school works hard to promote good attendance and this has resulted in significant improvement over the last two years. Most pupils arrive at school punctually.

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

The school has detailed curricular planning, which provides many interesting and practical indoor and outdoor learning opportunities for all pupils. It meets their needs and aspirations very effectively. All pupils show high levels of interest in their work and this is reflected in the good standards and progress made.

The overall provision for the development of pupils' key and basic skills is consistently good. Teachers work systematically to incorporate these into all planning documentation and implement them extremely effectively during lessons. A good range of strategies ensure the acquisition of basic reading and numeracy skills by pupils receiving additional support. Teachers identify more able pupils are identified well and ensure that they receive suitably challenging work.

Nearly all pupils benefit considerably from a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school also provides a wide range of visitors to the school and regularly arranges for pupils to visit places of interest.

There are good arrangements for pupils to develop an understanding of Welsh culture and their local heritage. However, the provision for developing the Welsh language is limited and inconsistent. Staff do not themselves practise and reinforce Welsh language patterns enough across the curriculum and throughout the daily life of the school.

There is good provision for pupils to learn about sustainability and to develop an understanding of the role they play in their school community, local society and in the wider world. There are effective arrangements for staff and pupils to be involved regularly recycling.

Teaching: Good

Teachers and support assistants have a very good understanding of how to provide well for pupils in the Foundation Phase. They all plan carefully and in detail, using a wide range of teaching strategies to engage all pupils in purposeful learning. All have high expectations of all pupils and readily engage with them to ensure that they are busy and learn through first-hand experience in classes and when working outside. The teachers and support staff question pupils cleverly to encourage them to think logically.

A particular strength is the consistent and effective way in which all teachers develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. In these lessons and across the curriculum, they place considerable emphasis on encouraging pupils to make choices for themselves and to be independent learners. Tasks are well matched to the different abilities of pupils. Teachers identify those who need additional support for their learning or personal needs and sensitively and effectively encourage them to play a full part in their lessons.

Teachers and their support assistants regularly and carefully assess pupils' progress formally and informally. They use assessment particularly effectively to inform their future planning. There are well organised and effective strategies to involve children in the assessment of their own learning. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to focus on their targets. Most pupils are just beginning to evaluate their own work. All teachers produce detailed and individualised pupil reports. These are appropriately shared with parents and carers.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are very good arrangements in place to support and encourage pupils' health and wellbeing and to promote their involvement in the school and the wider community.

The school works closely with health and other specialist services to support the comparatively large proportion of pupils who have significant individual needs. Well-established nurture groups help pupils with social and emotional needs to develop self-confidence and social skills.

The after-school clubs, outdoors environment and, especially the forest school opportunities, have a positive impact on pupils' health and learning development.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is well planned and organised in lessons, assemblies and school activities. Acts of collective worship meet requirements and have a strong spiritual dimension. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very effective and encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own actions.

The school engages very well with outside agencies. All staff work closely with a number of agencies, including the educational psychologist, education welfare officers and social services to support vulnerable pupils and their families very effectively. This enables these pupils to play a full part in the life of the school.

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

There are very effective procedures for the early diagnosis of pupils with additional learning needs. Pupils receive well-targeted support within their classes and through a range of intervention groups. This is strength of the school. The school has effective systems to review the progress pupils make and to provide them with appropriate support. Parents are fully involved and kept informed of the progress their children are making.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a very positive ethos. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and all areas of provision.

The celebration of diversity, equality and cultural differences is very well established in the curriculum and in school routines. Pupils are taught to respect the backgrounds, beliefs and cultures of other pupils and those outside of their school through celebrating traditional festivals and welcoming visitors from countries such as China and India.

The accommodation is good and well maintained. The classrooms and learning areas are spacious and attractive. Despite the age of the building, it provides a stimulating environment for pupils. The extensive outdoor environment, garden, and regular use of Coed Melin and Eaglesbush Valley for forest school experiences significantly enhances pupils' learning. Across the school there is a good range of resources to promote learning successfully. These are in a good condition and are easily accessible to pupils.

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

The headteacher gives a very clear and committed lead to other staff. All work closely and effectively together and share a common vision for the life and work of the school. The senior management team and co-ordinators are well informed about the quality of teaching and learning. They co-operate very effectively to ensure that standards are high and that the school is a vibrant and stimulating environment for pupils. They place suitable emphasis on ensuring that staff apply agreed strategies consistently and share their professional expertise effectively. They identify and address issues which relate to raising standards appropriately.

The governing body is committed to the school and is very supportive of the work of the professional staff. Recent initiatives have led governors to a better understanding of the school's performance and a closer attention to the quality of

teaching and learning. However, their role as critical friends is not well established and governors are not sufficiently focused on evaluating the outcomes of their decisions.

The school has made good progress in addressing local and national initiatives and priorities. Particular strengths include the progress the school is making in helping pupils to achieve well despite adverse social and economic circumstances, the implementation of the Foundation Phase and the attention it is giving to improving standards in literacy.

Improving quality: Good

The school has well-considered and extensive procedures for self-evaluation, including the analysis of performance data and seeking the opinions of parents and pupils. This has resulted in a rigorous and carefully-constructed plan to address the important priorities for the future. The headteacher and staff have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

There are clear links between the outcomes of self-evaluation and the priorities in the school development plan. The school carefully and regularly reviews the progress of the initiatives it is pursuing to raise standards and to address other priorities.

All teachers work very effectively in professional learning communities within the school and across schools to share their knowledge and expertise about teaching and learning, such as looking systematically at the performance of boys compared to girls.

Partnership working: Good

Parents are very supportive of the school and involved well in its life and work. They find the regular newsletters informative and the open door policy ensures that issues are dealt with promptly. The school has forged close links with the school-based Flying Start nursery which provides a worthwhile pre-school partnership and ensures an effective bridge between home and school. Effective partnerships with a number of local organisations, such as the local churches and involvement with the community advice centre, are very beneficial and help to form a close bond between pupils and their locality. Visits to a horticultural centre, the Penclacwydd wetlands area and visits from local artists significantly enrich pupils' learning experiences.

The school has a supportive partnership with the local authority in developing literacy and numeracy. The school has very strong links and good quality transition arrangements with its receiving junior school. Collaborative work with other schools is consistently good.

Resource management: Good

The school's budget is managed efficiently. There is an appropriate focus on linking spending to priorities for improvement. Effective financial decisions have led to the maintenance of staffing levels, the development of the outdoor learning areas, in particular Coed Melin, and the purchase of resources. These have had a significant

effect on the standards that learners achieve across the curriculum and to pupils' wellbeing. The school has a good level of resources and manages their use well.

The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff that it deploys effectively. The school has good arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time and these provide good continuity of experiences for pupils.

In view of the outcomes achieved by most pupils, and the efficient and effective management of resources, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the 2012 Foundation Phase pupil assessments for seven-year-olds, results at the expected outcome in the Foundation Phase indicator were above the family average and well above the local and national averages.

In language, literacy and communication results were above these averages at outcome 5+ and at the higher outcome 6+. In mathematical development results at both outcomes were well above family, local and national averages. Standards in personal, social education, wellbeing and cultural diversity were lower but remained close to these averages.

When these results are compared to those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school performed above 75% of these schools in language, literacy and communication and mathematical development, and above 50% of these schools in personal, social education, wellbeing and cultural diversity. The combined results were high. In these assessments girls outperformed boys in all areas particularly at the higher level. Boys' results were close to family, local and national averages. The results of girls were above.

Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs achieve at least in line with the standards expected of them. Those with English as an additional language made good progress overall and nearly all reach the expected levels. A minority perform below this in language, literacy and communication because they were new to the language or had spent a significant time abroad during the previous school year.

In 2012, those pupils entitled to free school meals outperformed those not receiving them.

As this was the first year that the Foundation Phase assessments were conducted, there is no reliable evidence to indicate trends over time.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Parent questionnaires

There were 16 responses to the parent questionnaire. The responses are in line with or more positive than those of other parents in primary schools in Wales.

All of those who responded agree that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their children like school;
- their children are helped to settle in successfully;
- their children made good progress;
- behaviour is good;
- teaching is good;
- all staff have high expectations of their children to try hard and do their best;
- homework is helping children make progress;
- the staff treat children fairly and with respect;
- children are helped to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- their children feel safe at school;
- children receive appropriate additional support;
- they are well informed about their children's progress;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school;
- they understand the procedures for dealing with complaints;
- children are encouraged to become more mature and responsible;
- there are a good range of activities including trips or visits; and
- the school is well run.

Nearly all parents believe that they are kept well informed about their children's progress.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Honnor	Team Inspector
Julie Ann Price	Lay Inspector
Liz Jackson	Peer Inspector
Rhiannon Crowhurst	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.