



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

**Oakfield Primary School
Ferntree Drive
St Mellons
Cardiff
CF3 0AA**

Date of inspection: May 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:

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

Oakfield Primary School is in St.Mellons on the outskirts of Cardiff. All pupils live locally. The school provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. There are currently 447 pupils on roll, including 112 part time pupils in the nursery unit.

The majority of the residential area is socially and economically disadvantaged with a high rate of unemployment. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals has risen over recent years and is currently 59%. This is well above local and national averages. A very few pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority. Around 29% of pupils have additional learning needs and a very few pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Most pupils speak English at home. Around 17% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and about half of these receive support for English as an additional language. No pupil speaks Welsh as a first language.

The school has recently developed an integrated children's facility, which provides regular sessions for parents and pre-school children in the locality. This includes a mother and toddler group, language and play sessions and baby gym.

In January 2011, Oakfield Primary School officially federated with Bryn Celyn Primary School in Pentwyn. The two schools are managed by one governing body and an executive headteacher (formerly the headteacher of Oakfield Primary School since 1990). The school also has a headteacher who was appointed at the time of the federation. The local authority will review the arrangement after three years.

The individual school budget per pupil for Oakfield Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,570 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £19,708 and the minimum is £2,828. Oakfield Primary School is 45th out of the 116 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the school is adequate because:

- nursery pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and good early learning skills by taking part in a wide variety of stimulating activities;
- the majority of pupils make good progress in most areas of the curriculum during their time in the school;
- standards of wellbeing are generally high and many pupils have positive attitudes to learning; and
- relationships between staff and pupils are good and this creates a supportive environment in which to learn.

However:

- standards in writing, Welsh, thinking and independent learning skills are not good enough;
- although pupil attendance is improving slowly, it has been poor for the last four years;
- there is no overview to ensure that pupils build on their existing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum; and
- teaching and assessment are not consistently good in all classes.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the headteacher and executive headteacher promote a sound vision and appropriate values for the work of the school;
- the school improvement plan identifies relevant targets for improvement that relate well to the standard of pupils' work; and
- partnerships are good, particularly the school's work with the integrated children's facility, which improves pupils' skills on entry to the nursery.

However:

- the roles and responsibilities of the headteacher and the executive headteacher are not clear enough to move the school forward effectively;
- monitoring and evaluation are not regular and rigorous enough and do not take enough account of first-hand evidence; and
- the school has not made enough progress towards addressing the recommendation related to assessment from the previous inspection.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in writing, Welsh, thinking and independent learning;
- R2 plan methodically to ensure pupils build their skills progressively from year to year in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum;
- R3 improve assessment practices so that teacher assessment is more accurate and pupils know how to improve their work;
- R4 clarify leadership roles and responsibilities;
- R5 monitor and evaluate improvements systematically and robustly using first-hand evidence;
- R6 improve attendance rates; and
- R7 comply with statutory requirements in relation to collective worship and performance management.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows 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

Many pupils enter the school with broadly average basic and social skills. Although a minority of pupils enter the school with below average starting points, most make good progress and achieve well in the nursery. End-of-key-stage teacher assessments indicate that most pupils achieve good standards by the age of seven and this compares well with the situation in other, similar schools. The performance of 11-year-olds is generally good when compared with that in other, similar schools. There have been steady improvements in most indicators over the past four years. However, work in pupils' books and results of standardised tests do not always reflect the good outcomes indicated by teacher assessment. Standards in writing have deteriorated significantly since 2009 and are below local, national and family averages.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately in relation to their starting points, as do pupils with English as an additional language. Overall, girls' performance is better than that of boys at the age of seven and 11. Up to the age of seven, there is usually little difference between the performance of pupils who receive free school meals and that of other pupils. The gap is more marked by the end of key stage 2. Teacher assessment suggests that a greater proportion of more able pupils achieve the higher than expected level (level 3) in all subjects at the end of key stage 1, and level 5 in English and science at the end of key stage 2, than in other, similar schools. However, there is little evidence of these high standards in pupils' books. The proportion of pupils achieving level 5 in mathematics does not compare well with that in other, similar schools.

In the majority of lessons observed, most pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their ability. In these lessons, pupils recall previous learning well and often learn new concepts quickly and effectively. However, in a minority of sessions, pupils make slow progress and do not achieve well enough.

Most pupils talk about their work confidently and ask and answer questions appropriately. The majority offer clear explanations and adapt their language well for different situations. Most pupils read appropriately for their age and have a positive attitude towards reading. They read a suitable variety of texts with understanding, using a relevant range of reading strategies to help them to make sense of their books. Although many pupils have a sound grasp of basic writing skills in English lessons, most do not write at length and do not write well enough in other subjects.

Pupils generally develop their numeracy and ICT skills well. Scrutiny of books shows that many pupils make steady progress in developing subject-specific skills over time, but their thinking and independent learning skills are weaker.

In Welsh lessons, most pupils understand, and respond to, a limited range of simple questions and instructions. Many are enthusiastic and have a positive attitude

towards using the language during daily focused sessions. Pupils' progress in developing their Welsh language skills overall is only adequate because they do not use enough Welsh informally outside specific lessons.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and many engage enthusiastically in a range of sporting activities and school clubs. Nearly all pupils enjoy school and most take good advantage of the learning opportunities on offer. Most pupils behave well and pupils are confident that staff deal effectively with any incidents of bullying.

Pupils contribute well to making decisions that improve their school life through the school council and eco group. These pupils encourage all members of the school community to live sustainably by following an eco-five-a-day challenge that they have devised. They feel that they play a valuable role in the school. Nearly all pupils show respect and concern for each other and many co-operate well in class. Older pupils demonstrate good social skills when acting as playground mentors to younger pupils.

Attendance rates have improved slowly since 2010 as a result of the school's more robust approach to ensuring that pupils attend school and better liaison with the education welfare officer. Despite this, the attendance rate is still too low when compared with that in other, similar schools.

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

Planned learning experiences meet the needs of the pupils in the majority of classes. Grouping arrangements for English and mathematics are generally effective in ensuring appropriate levels of challenge in these subjects for most pupils. In a minority of lessons observed, however, learning activities do not engage pupils fully because they are not always well matched to pupils' abilities.

The school provides stimulating and engaging opportunities for pupils through its comprehensive enrichment curriculum and extra-curricular provision. For example, well-established international partnerships enable all pupils to gain a good understanding of economic and environmental sustainability and of their roles as global citizens. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' wellbeing.

Long-term planning for the development of literacy, numeracy and Information and communication technology is in place and many teachers encourage pupils to develop these skills in lessons. However, there is no overview or systematic approach to the development of these skills across the curriculum that ensures they build year on year on the skills they have learned before.

The provision and planning for Welsh language development within lessons are appropriate, but opportunities for pupils to use Welsh informally are limited. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality, the history, arts and culture of Wales.

Teaching: Adequate

All adults establish good working relationships with pupils that foster effective learning. Teachers and support staff are good role models for pupils and manage most pupils' behaviour effectively. In the majority of classes, where teaching is good, lessons are prepared well, structured effectively and managed well, with regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and share outcomes. Teachers conduct sessions at a brisk pace, have good subject knowledge and use praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement well to stimulate learning. In the minority of lessons observed, where there are areas for improvement in the quality of teaching, activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers keep pupils inactive for too long and do not challenge them appropriately so they become restless.

The school gathers a wide range of pupil assessment data, which senior staff use to track progress and identify underachievement. Systems to standardise teachers' assessments of pupils' work are in the early stages of development. Recent moderation exercises in English and mathematics have improved staff understanding of how to assess pupils' work against National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, this has not been in place long enough to ensure accurate teacher assessment, particularly at the end of key stage 2.

The use of day-to-day assessment to move pupils forward in their learning is only adequate. Teachers generally provide effective oral feedback to pupils. They mark pupils' work regularly with positive comments, but rarely indicate how pupils can improve their work. When guidance is given, it is not always clearly linked to pupils' targets for improvement. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their peers are not fully established in daily practice. Reports to parents give a clear picture of their children's strengths and areas to develop. They include appropriate opportunities for parents to comment.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Good arrangements are in place to encourage pupils' health and wellbeing and these arrangements support learning effectively. Provision for promoting social and emotional development is well established across the school. The planned curriculum and enrichment activities nurture pupils' moral, cultural and spiritual development well, but arrangements for collective worship do not comply with statutory requirements.

The school works effectively with a relevant range of support agencies to ensure coherent provision for all pupils, especially those who are vulnerable and have specific needs. For example, the headteacher has worked closely with the local authority to implement a range of strategies to address the issue of poor attendance, and this has resulted in recent improvements.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The school identifies pupils' specific learning needs well and offers a range of suitable intervention programmes. This targeted support, particularly in literacy, enables these pupils to access the curriculum more effectively. Teachers and

support staff track the progress of these pupils carefully and monitor the impact of interventions conscientiously. Child-friendly individual education plans identify clear and appropriate targets for improvement and these are reviewed regularly.

Learning environment: Good

All staff create a positive and fair environment in which pupils can learn and develop effectively. Teachers and support staff take good account of pupils' backgrounds and work hard to meet their varied needs. The school encourages pupils to value and celebrate diversity successfully and to treat others fairly and with respect.

There are ample resources for learning in nearly all classrooms and subject areas and these are well organised and used effectively. Colourful displays throughout the school create an attractive learning environment and celebrate pupils' learning well. Most classrooms in the main building are well maintained, bright and appropriate for learning. However, the two demountable classrooms are old, in poor repair and damp.

Staff and members of the local community make very good use of the integrated children's facility, which is modern and welcoming, and the all-weather sports' facilities. The school grounds are extensive and they have been developed creatively to support learning and promote physical exercise.

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

The executive headteacher of the federation and the headteacher of the school promote a sound vision and values for the work of the school. The senior leadership team is made up of a balance of appropriately experienced teachers from across both key stages who work well together. There are appropriate job descriptions in place for most staff. However, the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders are not clear enough. The job description for the headteacher is not wholly appropriate and this limits her role in taking forward initiatives effectively.

The school's identified priorities take good account of national, local and school priorities, notably literacy, numeracy and tackling disadvantage. Nearly all staff understand the importance of these priorities in their day-to-day work. School leaders meet regularly, but agendas for meetings are not focused sharply and consistently enough on raising standards and evaluating innovations. Performance management identifies appropriate whole-school and individual targets that are appropriately linked to school improvement. However, procedures do not comply fully with statutory requirements. This means that judgements about teachers' performance are not based firmly enough on first-hand evidence.

The governing body is supportive of the school. Governors have recently become linked to curriculum areas. They make purposeful visits that help them to understand the day-to-day work of the school and how pupils learn. This, along with their developing understanding of school data, strengthens their ability to challenge the school. However their role as a 'critical friend' of the school is at an early stage of development.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's self-evaluation processes identify strengths and prioritise generally appropriate areas for improvement. Senior leaders make sound use of performance data to identify specific areas of weakness. They take suitable account of the views of pupils and draw significantly upon reviews by the local authority. However, the school does not examine all aspects of school life rigorously enough, and procedures for involving all staff, governors and parents in self-evaluation are at an early stage of development.

The most recent school development plan identifies relevant targets for improvement that are often linked to the outcomes of self-evaluation and focus appropriately on improving pupils' standards. This year, for example, all staff members have contributed effectively to the development of targets relating to oracy and reading. The newly-introduced group guided reading scheme is beginning to have a positive impact on reading standards throughout the school.

The school has recently established processes for monitoring progress towards improvement targets, but these are not robust enough. Planned opportunities for senior staff to assess first-hand evidence, through activities such as classroom observation and book scrutiny, are infrequent and do not focus well enough on standards.

Staff within the school share their expertise and knowledge well and work in a collaborative environment. The school is working appropriately to expand its commitment to professional networks, especially with schools within the catchment area and with the local secondary school.

The school has not made enough progress towards the recommendations relating to pupil assessment made in the last inspection report.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a wide range of partners to improve opportunities for pupils' learning and to improve outcomes.

The parent-teacher association works hard to raise the profile of the school in the community and to raise additional funds. As a result of these activities, the school purchased new reading books to support the group guided reading initiative. This has motivated pupils to read and helped raise reading standards.

The school's integrated children's facility is a welcoming environment to which parents and carers in the community bring their young children. A member of the school's support staff ensures close links between this facility and the nursery and this has significantly improved children's linguistic and social skills on entry to the school. Effective transition arrangements exist with the local secondary school and this enables Year 6 pupils to move into Year 7 with confidence.

Pupils have developed good creative and artistic skills through the 'artist-in-residence' programme run by initial teacher trainees from the South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education. The school has established effective links with

schools in other countries, such as China. As a result, many pupils show a good understanding of the wider world, different cultures, traditions and global issues. Visitors from organisations, such as the police, fire fighters and road safety, help pupils to understand better how to keep safe.

Joint standardisation and moderation meetings with cluster schools are beginning to help teachers develop a shared view of pupils' achievements.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has a good range of resources for teaching and learning. Members of staff have relevant qualifications and experience to carry out their roles and are usually deployed well to meet the needs of pupils. Senior leaders and governors monitor spending regularly and they have taken effective steps to reduce a deficit budget. The school has allocated significant funding to improving specific areas of the school's work, such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. However, this has not always raised standards in key areas requiring improvement, for example, in writing and Welsh.

The school meets staff's training needs well overall. Teachers receive suitable planning, preparation and assessment time which they use appropriately.

In view of the adequate standards achieved by pupils overall and the adequate provision and leadership, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Many pupils enter the school with basic and social skills that are broadly average although a minority of nursery pupils have below average starting points.

End-of-key-stage teacher assessments indicate that most pupils achieve good standards at the age of seven and 11 and this compares well to performance levels in other, similar schools. However, work in pupils' books and results of standardised tests do not always reflect the good outcomes indicated by teacher assessment.

For the last four years, teacher assessment outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 1 have placed the school in the top 50% of schools with similar proportions of pupils receiving free school meals. For nearly all indicators, school results have been above family, local authority and national averages for the past three years. Outcomes in English and mathematics are better than those in science, although science results are still above the family of schools' average. Performance at the higher level 3 fluctuates from year to year, but is consistently above the family average in all three core subjects.

According to end-of-key-stage assessment data, the performance of 11-year-olds at the end of key stage 2 is generally good when compared with that in other schools in its family. There have been steady improvements in the core subject indicator, English and mathematics over the past four years. Outcomes are generally better than the family of schools average and in line with, or just below, local authority and national averages. However, standards in writing have deteriorated significantly since 2009 and are below local, national and family averages. In 2011, the school was placed at or near the top of its family in all three core subjects. Attainment at the higher level 5 in English and science compares favourably with that of other, similar schools, but the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 in mathematics has been below family, national and local authority averages for the past two years.

Overall, girls' performance at the age of seven is better than that of boys at the expected level 2. However, in 2011, significantly more boys than girls achieved the higher level 3 in mathematics and science. There is no significant trend in the gap between the performance of key stage 1 pupils who receive free school meals and other pupils. In three years out of five, free school meals pupils achieved better standards than other pupils.

At the age of 11, girls perform better than boys in English, but boys achieve significantly better standards than girls in mathematics and science, particularly at the higher level 5 and this is in contrast to national trends. The difference between the attainment of pupils who receive free school meals and other pupils is more significant at the age of 11 and tends to be greater than the gap in other similar schools.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately in relation to their starting points, as do pupils with English as an additional language.

Teacher assessment suggests that a greater proportion of more able pupils achieve the higher level 3 in all subjects at key stage 1 and level 5 in English and science at key stage 2 than in other, similar schools. However, there is insufficient evidence in pupils' books or assessment profiles to confirm these high standards.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaire

Forty-five parents completed the questionnaire. Responses are overwhelmingly positive and are broadly similar to the views of parents in other schools across Wales.

All are satisfied with the school and agree that their children:

- like the school;
- were helped to settle in well when they started at the school;
- are making good progress; and
- are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise.

All parents also feel that:

- they are kept well informed about their children's progress;
- staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best; and
- the school helps their children to become more mature and take on responsibility.

Nearly all parents feel that:

- their children are safe at school;
- teaching is good;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- homework builds well on what their children learn in school;
- they are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems; and
- the school is well run

They also think that:

- their children receive appropriate additional support for their particular needs; and
- their children are prepared well for moving on to the next school.

A few parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour and the school's procedures for dealing with complaints. These are the only areas where parental opinions are significantly more negative than those of parents in other schools across Wales.

Responses to pupil questionnaires

Ninety-nine pupils from key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Their views are very similar to the opinions of pupils in other schools in Wales.

Nearly all pupils:

- feel safe in school;
- know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- think that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress;
- know whom to ask if they find their work hard; and
- say that the school teaches them how to be healthy.

Most pupils agree that:

- the school deals well enough with any bullying;
- they have lots of chances for regular exercise;
- they are doing well at school;
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work; and
- homework helps them to understand and improve their school work.

A few pupils are concerned that other children do not always behave well enough in class, at playtime and at lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Sarah Morgan	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Penny Lewis	Team Inspector
Deirdre Emberson	Lay Inspector
Amanda Jones	Peer Inspector
David Pedwell	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' (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.