



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

**Penllergaer Primary School
Pontarddulais Road
Penllergaer
Swansea
SA4 9DB**

Date of inspection: February 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

Penllergaer Primary School is situated in the village of Penllergaer, to the north-west of the city of Swansea. The area it serves includes the old village of Penllergaer, a large estate of rented homes, established owner-occupied houses and new private housing developments. Around 32% of pupils on the school roll come from the most deprived 30% of areas in Swansea. Approximately twelve per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well below the local authority and national average.

The school provides education for pupils between three and eleven years of age. Pupils are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis in the term following their third birthday. They begin full-time education at the start of the academic year during which they become four. Currently there are 342 full-time pupils at the school and 62 nursery pupils who attend part-time. The school has two specialist teaching facilities, catering for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties from across Swansea local authority. At present, there are seven pupils in these classes in total. The current headteacher took up her appointment in January 2011.

Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnic origin and speak English at home. Seven per cent of pupils have English as an additional language but most of these pupils are developing competence in English. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Pupils are taught through the medium of English and Welsh is taught as a second language. Seventeen per cent of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs, including 18 pupils who have statements of special educational needs. Seven of these pupils attend the specialist teaching facility.

The individual school budget per pupil for Penllergaer Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,216 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Swansea is £11,089 and the minimum is £2,560. Penllergaer Primary School is 38th out of the 86 primary schools in Swansea 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 school's current performance is good. This is because:

- the school has an inclusive ethos which encourages all pupils to make the most of their opportunities in a positive and exciting learning environment;
- behaviour is very good and pupils have a positive attitude to all aspects of school life;
- most pupils make good progress and achieve well at all stages of their education;
- nearly all pupils communicate very effectively with their friends and with adults; and
- teachers and support staff plan a wide range of interesting learning activities that motivate pupils well and successfully develop pupils' skills across the curriculum.

Prospects for improvement

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

- the headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body have a clear vision for the school that they communicate very effectively to all stakeholders;
- leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development extremely well;
- senior leaders are firmly committed to a culture of shared leadership and this enables staff at all levels to understand and develop their roles and responsibilities extremely effectively;
- self-evaluation is based firmly on reliable, first-hand evidence, including an exceptionally thorough and comprehensive analysis of a wide range of data; and
- over the past year senior leaders have brought about many improvements that have had a clear impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing in several key areas.

Recommendations

- R1 improve standards in Welsh, particularly at key stage 2;
- R2 strengthen pupils' skills in extended writing;
- R3 focus more specifically on developing and applying investigative skills in science;
and
- R4 consistently provide appropriately challenging learning activities for all pupils.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many pupils start school with above average basic and social skills. Outcomes for pupils at the age of seven in English, mathematics and science are generally good. When considered separately from the outcomes of seven-year-olds in the specialist teaching facility, they compare well with local authority and national averages, as well as with those of similar school across Wales.

At the age of eleven, most pupils attain the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. These results are generally in line with those of similar schools, when considered separately from the outcomes of key stage 2 pupils in the specialist teaching facility. Performance at the higher level 3 and level 5 has been consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science.

In nearly all classes, most pupils make good progress over time. They recall previous learning well and relate their knowledge, understanding and skills readily to new concepts and situations. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes achieve well. Those in the specialist teaching facilities make good, and often very good, progress in relation to their abilities and their starting points. In general, there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

From a very early age, Foundation Phase pupils listen attentively, concentrate well and speak confidently. When reading, they use an appropriate range of strategies, such as phonic knowledge and picture clues, when reading familiar and unfamiliar texts. Young pupils use mark-making and writing naturally as a means of communication. Nearly all key stage 2 pupils communicate effectively with others in a wide range of formal and informal situations. Many of these pupils use their reading skills confidently to access all areas of the curriculum. They read fluently with appropriate intonation and express their book preferences confidently and thoughtfully. Older and more able pupils explain why they admire the work of particular authors and predict possible outcomes of stories based on their previous reading experiences. Although many pupils write competently for a wide range of purposes, they do not often write at length so extended writing skills are generally underdeveloped. Pupils in the specialist teaching facilities use a range of strategies, including communication aids and sign language, skilfully to answer questions and make choices.

Most pupils develop very good skills in Information and communication technology and apply them confidently to many areas of learning. For example, older Foundation Phase pupils use tablet computers competently to record and evaluate their work in physical development in order to improve their performance. In many lessons, pupils demonstrate mature thinking skills when tackling problems-solving tasks.

Nursery pupils make a very good start in developing the Welsh language. Most learn a good range of Welsh vocabulary for their age and a minority use this language naturally when playing. Many pupils build successfully on this good start through the Foundation Phase and achieve appropriate standards in oral communication in particular. However, progress is not as good in key stage 2. Older pupils do not apply their Welsh language skills enough outside specific Welsh lessons.

Wellbeing: Excellent

All pupils have a particularly good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and developing their fitness. The school's excellent work in this area and the impact it has on pupils' wellbeing was recognised through the achievement of the National Quality Award for Healthy Schools, an award held by only a very few schools in Wales.

Nearly all pupils are happy and feel safe in school and have very positive attitudes towards learning. They enjoy their work and engage enthusiastically with the broad range of opportunities offered to them. Attendance figures have improved significantly, rising to nearly 94% in the last academic year. This compares favourably with similar schools across Wales.

Pupils play a full and active part in school life and feel that senior leaders value their opinions highly. Members of the school council and eco committee display mature and responsible attitudes. They represent pupils' opinions well and are regularly involved in making decisions that bring positive changes to the school. Their leadership in developing a code of conduct for the playground has been a key factor in improving standards of behaviour. Behaviour observed during lessons and around the school are exemplary. Pupils are courteous and considerate to one other, staff and visitors.

Many pupils' develop excellent social and life skills. For example, their entrepreneurial approach to running the fruit tuck shop is sector-leading and highly effective in developing research, organisational, decision-making and analytical skills. These activities prepare older pupils very well for life outside school and enable them to ensure that most pupils access fresh produce every day. Most pupils also have mature thinking, problem solving and team building skills as a result of the school's innovative outdoor and adventurous curriculum.

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

Pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum which allows them to build effectively on their previous knowledge, understanding and skills in most areas of the curriculum. Highly skilled teaching assistants support groups of learners of all ages with interventions appropriate to their needs.

Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum. Planning for the development of communication and thinking skills is thorough in nearly all classes. Planning for information and communication

technology is consistently good for all pupils. Teachers provide appropriate activities for pupils to improve their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, there are limited opportunities for older key stage 2 pupils to develop and apply investigative skills in science.

Provision and planning for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension are appropriate. All pupils gain a broad understanding of life in Wales and Welsh culture through the provision of a wide range of interesting and relevant activities. However pupils are not encouraged to use the Welsh language enough in areas of the curriculum outside specific Welsh lessons.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is promoted successfully through curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils understand the importance of recycling and living sustainably and most pupils know how their actions affect the environment. Older pupils display a mature understanding of the ethics and economics of Fair Trade. Pupils gain a very good understanding of their place in the wider world through links with a school in China, an orphanage in Romania and through many charity fundraising efforts.

Teaching: Good

Most teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons thoroughly to ensure that pupils are motivated and fully engaged in their learning. This secures good pupil progress for most pupils in nearly all classes. Many teachers organise classroom activities carefully and use a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies that successfully encourage thinking and independent and group learning. In a few excellent lessons, teachers have very high expectations and convey energy and a thirst for learning to their pupils. These teachers control the pace of learning particularly effectively to provide appropriate challenge throughout the session and ensure that pupils of all abilities make very good progress. In a few lessons where teaching is not as effective as it should be, learning activities are not always appropriate to the needs and abilities of all pupils.

Many teachers use a suitable range of assessment strategies to provide feedback to pupils. This helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Many teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to assess themselves and their friends against specific success criteria. Where teachers use these strategies most effectively, pupils contribute to and agree success criteria. This raises pupils' expectations of what they can achieve and enables them to monitor their own progress accurately.

The school collects a wealth of assessment data which all staff analyse carefully and the comprehensive use of this data is a strength of the school. Teachers in mainstream classes and in the specialist teaching facility use these assessment outcomes very effectively to track progress across the curriculum, diagnose pupils' individual needs and target interventions carefully. Teachers' reports to parents are clear and detailed and highlight pupils' targets for improvement in key areas. They provide appropriate opportunities for pupils and parents to respond to them.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school has robust policies and procedures to promote health and wellbeing and to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have opportunities to take part in many activities that promote fitness and healthy living. Messages of tolerance and respect for others are fundamental to the school's culture and are communicated effectively.

The provision for personal and social education is highly effective in promoting pupils' social and life skills. It incorporates an innovative, whole school approach to outdoor and adventurous activities, using the school's indoor climbing wall as a starting point for team-building and problem-solving tasks. Pupils of all ages benefit from carefully structured lessons that require them to work co-operatively, compromise and make decisions with others. Staff often provide training for other schools and share their good practice across the local authority. The approach has a significant impact on pupil wellbeing and the development of pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills and is a sector-leading feature of the school.

The school engages the support of external agencies and specialists effectively. The coordinator for special education needs organises their input very efficiently and this enables the school to provide very well for its most vulnerable pupils. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes, and for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, is a strength of the school. Staff identify pupils' needs accurately, develop detailed educational plans and provide pupils with appropriate, often individualised, interventions. As a result, pupils make at least good progress in relation to their starting points. The exemplary way in which specialist support staff share their expertise with staff in the mainstream is an important factor in the school's success in this area.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a caring and respectful community. The values policy successfully promotes good standards of behaviour and respect throughout the school. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Strong international links allow pupils to understand diversity and aspects of multiculturalism well. Pupils from the specialist teaching facilities are fully involved in the life of the school and contribute positively to the overall ethos.

Learning resources are plentiful and appropriate to the needs of pupils, including a wealth of specialist equipment for pupils with special and medical needs. The accommodation and facilities are very well maintained and provide a stimulating and safe environment. Despite the limitations of the internal accommodation, staff makes innovative use of the available indoor space. Many interesting outdoor areas have been developed and teachers and support staff use these creatively to enhance teaching and learning.

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

Leadership: Excellent

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have clear strategic aims for the school and have identified relevant priorities for improving standards and provision for pupils. They communicate these objectives very effectively so that all stakeholders, including parents and pupils, understand and share their vision.

The headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership and has very high expectations of all staff. The meticulously planned annual programme of meetings and training activities ensures that communication is effective and that leaders focus sharply on the school's strategic priorities. Senior leaders encourage staff at all levels to take a lead in key aspects of the work and life of the school. This shared approach to school improvement empowers staff and secures their enthusiasm and commitment. It is an excellent feature of the school's work.

The school's arrangements for performance management are very well established, comprehensive and appropriate. They encourage high quality professional development that supports the developmental needs of the school.

Governors take their roles and responsibilities seriously and are very well informed about all aspects of school life. Recently, their training programme has focused on improving governors' knowledge and understanding of how the school's performance compares with that of other, similar schools. They have established a data committee that scrutinises all forms of data closely. This is an excellent response to a recent national priority and it enables all governors to challenge all aspects of school performance confidently and robustly.

School leaders make good use of relevant and appropriate national and local initiatives to support their firm commitment to bringing about improvement in outcomes for pupils.

Improving quality: Excellent

Over the past year, the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have developed a very strong culture of aiming for excellence at all levels. Leaders base self-evaluation upon extensive evidence, including exceptionally detailed and robust analysis of pupil performance and progress data, scrutiny of work and high quality subject evaluations. Leaders consult stakeholders widely and make very good use of responses to consultations. The school listens particularly well to the views of pupils who make realistic suggestions for improvements which are frequently acted upon. This thorough identification of the school's strengths and areas for development is an excellent feature of its work. It has resulted in the school making significant progress in several key areas in a relatively short period of time, including improvements in attendance, reading and mathematics.

The school development plan is a detailed document that identifies relevant and challenging aims that address the school's priorities well. It links very effectively with other aspects of improvement planning, such as performance management. Leaders

at all levels know and understand their responsibilities in relation to improvement planning. They monitor progress and evaluate impact effectively and report their findings to senior leaders competently. This level of delegated responsibility is key to securing school improvement and is an excellent feature.

The school is a dynamic professional learning community with a strong focus on improving standards. Involvement in several projects with other schools in the cluster has brought about measurable improvements in reading and science, for example. The establishment of close links with schools from its All-Wales family of schools is an excellent response to a Welsh Government initiative and this has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Partnership working: Good

The school works productively with a wide range of partners and this enriches pupils' learning and wellbeing. The introduction of homework journals for all pupils from Year 2 on strengthens links with parents and enables them to support their children more effectively. Pupils benefit significantly from funds raised by the parent-teacher association. The tablet computers purchased recently are already improving pupils' skills in information and communication technology. The school has established valuable partnerships with the community. For example, teachers and pupils use local places of interest, such as Penllergare Woods, to develop their understanding of geography and environmental issues. Positive relationships exist with volunteers from the local community who support pupils' learning by reading and gardening with pupils.

Successful transition arrangements exist with the local secondary school and its cluster of primary schools. They work well together to aid the moderation and standardisation of teacher assessments and good arrangements are in place to share teaching expertise. Secondary teachers deliver some science and physical education lessons to upper key stage 2 and pupils who are more able and talented in mathematics benefit significantly from specialist classes. The school has strong links with a consortium of other Swansea schools that share financial resources to organise joint professional development activities that improve teaching and learning.

Resource management: Good

Leaders manage staff and resources very well. All staff are deployed appropriately and arrangements are flexible enough to meet the varied needs of pupils. The school has a strong culture of promoting staff's professional development through training and the sharing of good practice. All staff evaluate the impact of these opportunities on their own practice and on pupil outcomes. Training activities are linked well to performance management targets and these are matched to the programme of whole school and individual staff professional development.

Financial planning decisions link closely to the school's priorities for development. The sound investments made by the school in staff training, equipment and the learning environment all benefit the pupils in the school directly. Overall, pupils achieve well and the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The school has two specialist teaching facilities, one for key stage 1 pupils and another for key stage 2 pupils. These pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress in relation to their abilities and starting points. However, when analysing pupil attainment in relation to local, national and family of school comparators, it is important to consider the attainment of mainstream pupils separately to gain a clear picture of how the school's data compares to that of other schools.

Most pupils make good progress during their time in the nursery. As a result, many enter the reception class with above average skills in literacy and numeracy and most have good social skills. By the age of seven, most pupils have made good progress. Most mainstream pupils attain the expected level 2, in line with national expectations, in English, mathematics and science. These outcomes compare well with local authority and national averages, as well as with those of similar school across Wales, for the last five years. The proportion of seven-year-olds achieving the higher level 3 has been consistently well above the local, national and family of schools averages in all three core subjects. Recently, there has been a slightly downward trend in attainment at level 3 in maths and science. However, this is mainly due to improved assessment and moderation procedures in the school that have resulted in more accurate teacher assessment at all levels.

At the age of eleven, most mainstream pupils attain the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science. These results are generally in line with local, national and family of school averages. There has been a slight downward trend in attainment over the past two years. However, when the results of the mainstream pupils are considered separately from the outcomes of pupils in the specialist teaching facility, and when improved accuracy of assessment is taken into consideration, level 4 performance remains generally good. The proportion of eleven-year-olds attaining the higher level 5 is very high and places the school consistently in the first or second quarter for the last five years, when compared to other, similar schools across Wales.

Minority ethnic pupils and those with English as an additional language make at least expected progress and achieve well at the school. In recent years there has often been a significant gap between the end-of-key-stage attainment of seven-year-old pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not. At the end of key stage 2, there is no consistent pattern; in 2011, for example, pupils entitled to free school meals performed better than those who are were not. However, this data needs to be treated with caution as the number of pupils entitled to free schools meals in some year groups is very low. In these cases, a significant gap may only represent a very few pupils.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fifty nine parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Most expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school and this is in line with national comparisons. All parents say that their children like school and that they were helped to settle in well. Nearly all feel that their children are safe in school and think that behaviour is good. All believe that teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. Nearly all feel that staff have high expectations of pupils and are confident that their children are treated fairly and with respect. Nearly all agree that the school encourages their children to eat healthily and take regular exercise. All parents who responded think that the school is well run. Most are happy to approach the school if they have questions, although a few do not fully understand what to do if they wish to make a formal complaint. A minority do not feel that they know enough about how well their children are doing and a very few do not feel that homework always builds well on what their children are doing at school. Most parents think that their children receive appropriate additional support for their additional learning needs. All parents and carers believe that teachers help their children to become more mature and take on responsibility and they feel that their children are well prepared for the move to the secondary school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

One hundred and eight pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and responses to most questions were very positive. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school. Most know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset and feel that the school deals well with any bullying. Most agree that the school helps them to be healthy and provides them with plenty of opportunities to be physically active. Nearly all feel strongly that teachers and support staff help them to learn and make progress and most know what to do if they are struggling. Nevertheless, a few feel that they are not doing well enough at school. Most think that there are enough resources to enable them to learn effectively. A minority of pupils have concerns about behaviour on the playground and feel that they cannot always get their work done in class. A minority do not feel that homework helps them to improve their work in school. These negative responses are considerably higher than national averages.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Sarah Morgan	Reporting Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector
Mike Hayes	Team Inspector
Enir Rees Morgan	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Rob Pullen	Peer Inspector
Jayne Woolcock	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. FPYear 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.