



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

**Townhill Community Primary School
Townhill Road
Townhill
Swansea
SA1 6PT**

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

Townhill Community Primary School is in the heart of the city of Swansea. The area is one of considerable economic deprivation.

There are 500 pupils aged three to eleven years in the school. This includes 115 pupils in the nursery who attend on a part-time basis. Pupils are organised into a nursery class, 14 mainstream classes and two classes for pupils with special educational needs. All pupils come from the local area.

Almost 50% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the average for the local authority and Wales. A very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language. The school has identified almost a third of pupils as having additional learning needs, including 30 pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. Just over a half of these statemented pupils attend the specialist facilities for those with moderate learning difficulties. Six pupils are currently looked after by the local authority, seven are supported by the 'team around the family' and 12 are 'children in need'. There have been a few fixed-term exclusions in the last 12 months.

Since the last inspection in 2006, there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff in the school. Flying Start provision was established in the school in 2008 and the school has also been an early start school for the Foundation Phase since 2009. This means that no performance data relating to pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is available for key stage 1 since this date.

The individual school budget per pupil for Townhill Community Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,178 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Swansea is £11,089 and the minimum is £2,560. Townhill Community Primary School is 42nd 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	Good

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress from their starting points, which are often exceptionally low;
- in key stage 2, pupils' performance over recent years has improved significantly;
- standards of pupils' wellbeing are excellent;
- nearly all pupils behave well in classes and around the school;
- the overall quality of teaching is good; and
- the level of care, support and guidance provided to pupils is excellent.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is an excellent ethos that supports improvements in learning and teaching effectively;
- it is well led by senior staff and governors who have high expectations of staff and pupils;
- all staff work very well together as an effective team;
- there is a sound process for self-evaluation; and
- targets for improvement focus appropriately on raising standards and improving quality.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

R1 improve standards further in oracy and reading;

R2 narrow the gap between the performance of pupils in receipt of free school meals and other pupils; and

R3 improve further the attendance and punctuality of pupils.

What happens next?

Townhill Community Primary School will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study describing the excellent restorative practice strategies identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Over recent years, the performance of pupils has improved significantly.

Nearly all pupils enter the school with skills, especially language skills, significantly below those normally expected for pupils of their age. However, most pupils make good progress against their individual targets, and achieve well in line with their ability by the time they leave school at the end of key stage 2.

In the work scrutinised and in lessons observed, the standard of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is generally good. Pupils use and apply these skills well across the curriculum.

The thinking skills of most pupils and their ability to work independently are good. Across the school, most pupils make sensible decisions about their work and know what to do when faced with new challenges.

In all classes, most pupils listen very well and speak clearly, conveying their thoughts and feelings confidently. Most pupils read a wide range of different texts well and talk enthusiastically about what they have read. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils use appropriate strategies for decoding unfamiliar words and younger pupils use picture clues well to help them with the meaning of words. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read confidently and accurately. More able pupils read fluently and expressively. The majority of pupils are competent writers and write well in a variety of forms and for different purposes. They spell and punctuate their work correctly. Many pupils make good use in their work of appropriate subject terminology.

Pupils' standards in Welsh are generally good. Pupils throughout the school use incidental Welsh naturally and most make good progress in gaining skills in the Welsh language. They achieve well in lessons and listen and respond appropriately in a variety of different situations. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read at an appropriate standard in Welsh.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science does not compare well with that of pupils in other similar schools. This is due mainly to the exceptionally low starting points for nearly all pupils and the significant number of pupils who have additional learning needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, pupils' performance in reading has shown an upward trend over the last few years, but is still below the average for pupils in the local authority.

Since the last inspection in 2006, the school has raised pupils' performance at the end of key stage 2 significantly. In 2006, 38% of pupils achieved the expected level (level 4) in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This increased to 62% in 2011 and the school's targets for this year suggest that 70% of pupils will

achieve the expected level (level 4). This level of performance generally does not compare well with the performance of pupils in other similar schools. However, when the performance of pupils in the special classes is taken into account, the difference is not as significant, and the overall performance of pupils in all areas is slightly higher than the family average.

Pupils' standards in writing have steadily improved over the last three years and pupils' performance in reading and writing at the higher than expected level (level 5) is above the family average.

Pupils entitled to free school meals generally achieve less well than other pupils of a similar age. In key stage 2, girls generally do better than boys in achieving the expected level (level 4), but boys tend to do better than girls in achieving the higher level (level 5).

Wellbeing: Excellent

Pupils' wellbeing is excellent. They enjoy coming to school and are generally well motivated to learn.

Pupils consistently apply very effective strategies to resolve many of their difficult personal and social issues. The use of these strategies is firmly embedded throughout the school. As a result, pupils of all ages focus effectively on their learning and display high levels of engagement and interest in lessons. A few pupils have been trained as peer-mediators and they are role models of good behaviour. These pupils promote a positive playground atmosphere by supporting and helping pupils to mix and play well together. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Through regular school activities designed to promote dental health, most pupils know about how to care for their teeth.

Pupils' attendance has improved significantly over recent years and is now almost 92%. However, despite extensive efforts by the school, this level of attendance is still below that of pupils in similar schools. Most pupils arrive at school punctually, but there are a few persistent latecomers.

Very strong working relationships between pupils and staff create a very calm classroom environment where pupils are extremely well supported. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school.

Pupils are very considerate, supportive and extremely respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. They take full responsibility for their own actions and are developing the skills that enable them to work productively with others, solve problems and become effective learners.

Pupils share responsibilities and are trusted to make decisions, for example as play-pals and members of the eco-committee. The school council is highly valued and makes positive contributions to the life of the school, for example by being involved in the appointment of a new headteacher and making decisions about how the school environment can be improved.

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

The curriculum is broad, balanced and provides a good range of experiences that engage and interest all pupils. Pupils benefit from learning through relevant themes and topics.

Teachers plan systematically for the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. In particular, teachers plan well for pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

The school is fully inclusive and provides pupils who have additional and complex learning needs, including pupils who work within the specialist teaching facilities, with learning experiences that meet national curriculum requirements appropriately.

Pupils are involved in shaping the direction of their learning well. Older pupils in key stage 2 produce detailed thematic plans which outline what they already know and what they need to learn. Teachers use these plans effectively to take account of pupils' prior learning and achievements.

The school provides pupils and parents with an extensive range of out-of-school learning activities, for example 'Super Dads' and 'Letting Everything Out' clubs. These activities enhance the school's provision significantly and are well attended by pupils and parents.

The school makes good provision for promoting the Welsh language and staff and pupils use it extensively in all classes. The school promotes the culture and heritage of Wales well through, for example, numerous visits to places of interest and visits to the school by a range of Welsh artists and illustrators.

There is good provision for pupils to learn about sustainability and to develop an understanding of the role they play in the school community, the local society and the wider world. There are good links with a school in Kenya. Staff and pupils are actively involved in a range of recycling and energy conservation activities and these have raised pupils' awareness of using limited resources wisely.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently good. Teachers prepare well for all lessons and deliver them at a good pace. They set clear learning objectives and use a good variety of questioning techniques to extend pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning extremely well. Working relationships between pupils and all staff are excellent and based on mutual respect. Staff consistently apply very effective strategies to resolve many pupils' difficult personal and social issues. Staff manage pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning sensitively and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Teachers use agreed assessment strategies consistently throughout the school. They provide good feedback to pupils on their work and progress. They mark pupils'

written work in detail and provide them with clear and positive comments about how to improve their work. Pupils are involved in their own learning through self-assessment activities and they also engage in discussing and evaluating the work of other pupils.

The school makes very effective use of a wide variety of detailed assessment information to track pupils' progress and wellbeing. The 'Class Story', for example, provides a thorough visual summary of pupils' progress and enables teachers and support staff to work closely together to plan appropriately for pupils' different needs.

Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through regular consultation evenings and informal opportunities to discuss issues with teachers. Reports to parents are very detailed, identify appropriate targets for improvement and meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school's provision for supporting all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, is excellent.

The work of the restorative team, led by the pastoral manager, is innovative. This team work very effectively with pupils, parents, the community and other agencies to resolve conflicts and to maintain very positive relationships and engagement with all partners. Throughout the school, all staff provide a very firmly-embedded structure of support for pupils and parents. In each class, staff start the day by organising pupils into circle and 'check-in' sessions. These ensure that pupils express and manage their emotions extremely well. As a result, nearly all pupils begin work in a calm manner with an eagerness to engage in learning activities.

The consistent application of restorative practice strategies by all staff and pupils is having a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing, behaviour and attitudes to learning. In addition, the pastoral manager maintains meticulous records of a range of welfare issues, which significantly reduce the risk of harm to pupils.

A few pupils have been trained as peer-mediators. They take their responsibilities seriously and make an effective contribution towards improving pupils' behaviour outside lessons.

The school collaborates extremely well with a range of specialist agencies. The educational psychologist, local authority behaviour support team, social services, educational welfare officer and police liaise very regularly with the school to provide excellent support for vulnerable pupils and parents.

There are very good arrangements for pupils who need additional support with their learning and these have a positive impact on standards. School staff use a wide range of relevant information to plan and review well-targeted support for individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils and parents are fully involved in setting improvement targets for individual pupils and they review their progress regularly. Parents feel that they are very well informed and that the school is meeting the needs of their children very well.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. As a result, pupils show a great deal of courtesy, respect and consideration for each other and all adults.

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

Learning environment: Excellent

The school has a calm and inclusive ethos. It provides a very safe and extremely supportive learning environment for pupils. Parents, staff and pupils feel that there is an exceptional sense of care, inclusion and community cohesion within the school. Strategies such as restorative practices and the healthy schools initiative are having a significant beneficial impact on pupils' wellbeing and progress in learning.

The celebration of diversity, equality and cultural differences is firmly embedded in the curriculum and consistently applied in all classrooms and school routines. Pupils are taught to respect the backgrounds, beliefs and cultures of others within the community and from further afield. All pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and the extra-curricular provision offered.

The school accommodation and facilities are very good and provide a stimulating, attractive learning and teaching environment that is well maintained. Staff make exceptional use of an old building and there are some outstanding features that enhance provision considerably. These include the restorative room, soft-play room, multi-sensory room and the inner quadrants, which are used very effectively as outdoor classrooms. The school is well resourced.

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

The headteacher, governors and leadership team have been very successful in developing a shared vision for the school.

The headteacher provides very clear leadership to all staff in the school. He has a highly visible presence around the school and an effective 'hands-on' leadership style. The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations and they deal well with the very many challenges faced by the school.

Clear roles and responsibilities of staff and very effective team structures contribute well to the school's focus on raising standards. There is an appropriate performance management process which helps to support improvements in learning and teaching. Senior staff use information about pupils' performance well to identify the school's priorities for development.

Governors support the school very well and know about the performance of pupils and about initiatives the school is developing. Governors have a very clear and comprehensive understanding of safeguarding issues and a few governors have very strong links with school subject leaders. A strategy of informal monthly lunchtime meetings, together with formal meetings, helps governors to know the school well. Governors respond well to requests from parents about their annual report, which is interesting and informative.

The school is making very good progress in introducing a number of local and national priorities, such as tackling social and economic disadvantage and improving reading. The Restorative Practice initiative is having an excellent impact on pupils' wellbeing and the focus on reading is leading to an improvement in pupils' standards.

Improving quality: Good

The school uses a good range of first-hand evidence to identify accurately its main strengths and areas for improvement. It makes very good use of the data gathered on the performance of pupils and also uses information gathered from classroom observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the views of pupils and parents.

The outcomes of the self-evaluation process are used well to determine appropriate priorities for school improvement, for example developing pupils' skills in oracy and reading. Implementation of the school development plan is generally having a positive impact on provision and standards in the school.

The school is developing as a strong learning community with staff working together regularly in curriculum groups. Teachers and support staff are jointly involved in training events and they visit each other's classrooms regularly to share good practice. Staff also take part in training activities with other schools and make visits to these to improve their knowledge of, for example, guided reading strategies. The school hosts the visits of teachers from other schools who come to learn about its innovative work in 'Restorative Practice'.

Partnership working: Excellent

The partnerships between the school and parents, the community and other organisations are outstanding. They contribute extremely effectively towards enriching the provision in the school and they have a very positive impact on improving pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The partnership with parents is exceptional and the school actively encourages parents to be partners in their children's learning in a wide variety of ways. The school ensures that it liaises well with parents and, over many years, has built up a very strong sense of trust with them. Parents value the school's open door policy and they are included in almost every aspect of the work of the school. The school provides extensive and highly effective opportunities for parents to improve their own skills and to participate in innovative strategies in the school such as those concerned with 'Restorative Practices'.

The school has developed an effective pastoral and family support strategy. This supports parents who find it difficult to make links with the school and the local community. The school identifies parents who require support and it builds a firm level of trust with them. This process is successful in helping parents re-engage with the school and community.

Partnerships with a number of local organisations, such as the Phoenix Centre, are very beneficial and the school is a focus for community activity. These links have a positive influence on enriching pupils' experiences and on the quality of their education.

The school has extremely close links with the Little Gems Flying Start Nursery. This strong pre-school partnership ensures an effective link between home and school. The partnership gives the school a clear indication of the educational, social and health needs of new pupils and ensures that it puts in place appropriate early support for those that need it.

Staff and pupils benefit from the numerous placements provided in the school for the mentoring and training of trainee teachers and child care practitioners. These have a positive impact on school life.

Collaborative work with other schools is consistently good. There are good quality portfolios of moderated pupils' work in a range of subjects. The school has very strong links and transition arrangements with its partner secondary school.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its budget well. There are enough qualified teachers and support staff and they are deployed effectively. The school identifies and meets the professional development needs of teaching and support staff through suitable performance management procedures. There are very good arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time.

The school identifies and allocates resources appropriately in line with the priorities identified in its school development plan. There are examples of very effective financial decisions being made. The appointment of a temporary teaching and learning responsibility post holder for reading is giving this area of work the necessary focus needed to further improve standards. The creation of a pastoral manager post is contributing extremely effectively to improving pupils' wellbeing.

There is generally a good range of learning resources, which are managed and used well. The school accommodation and outside learning areas are given a high priority and have been developed and maintained to a very good standard.

In view of the outcomes achieved by pupils from relatively low starting points and the school's good quality of provision overall, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Townhill Community Primary School is the third most challenged in its family of schools (a group of schools with similar characteristics).

No core data is available for pupils' performance in key stage 1 for the last two years, as the school has been a Foundation Phase Early Start school since September 2009. However, reading test information indicates that pupils' performance has shown an upward trend over the last few years, although it is still below the average for pupils in the local authority.

In key stage 2, pupils' performance in the core subjects has improved significantly over recent years. However, it has generally not compared well with the performance of pupils in other similar schools and has placed the school consistently in the bottom half or quarter of similar schools. In key stage 2, 62% of pupils in 2011 achieved the expected level (level 4) in the core subject indicator (the expected level in English, mathematics and science). The overall performance of these pupils was below the average for the family of schools. However, when the performance of pupils in the special classes is taken into account, the difference is not as significant and the overall performance of pupils in all areas was slightly higher than the family average.

In English, pupils' performance has generally improved over the last few years, but it still does not compare well with the performance of pupils in other similar schools. In oracy, there has been a downward trend. However, pupils' performance in relation to targets set by teachers show that standards in oracy this year are improving. In writing, there has been a steady improvement over the last three years and pupils' performance in reading and writing at the higher than expected level (level 5) is above the family average.

In mathematics and science, pupils' performance at the expected and the higher levels was about the same as the average for the family of schools.

Pupils entitled to free school meals generally achieve less well than other pupils of a similar age. In key stage 2, girls generally do better than boys in achieving the expected level (level 4), but boys tend to do better than girls in achieving the higher level (level 5).

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

Two hundred and six pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire fully.

All pupils think that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress and nearly all know whom to talk to if they find their work hard. In addition, most pupils know who to talk to if they are worried or upset. As a result, nearly all pupils say that they feel safe in school and most state that they are doing well.

Nearly all pupils feel the school teaches them how to keep healthy and most state they have lots of opportunities to get regular exercise. Most pupils feel they have enough books and equipment and many state that homework helps them to improve their work in school.

Nearly all pupils feel that the school deals well with bullying. A minority feel that the behaviour of others interferes with their work in class and that children do not behave well at break times.

Overall, most of these views are in line with the views of pupils in other schools across Wales. Slightly more pupils in Townhill Community School express negative comments about the behaviour of other pupils in class and at playtimes and lunch time.

Parent questionnaires

There were 137 responses to the parent questionnaire.

All parents feel the school is well run and they are satisfied with the school. Nearly all parents state that their children were helped to settle into school when they first started. Nearly all also feel that their children like school and are happy and safe there. All parents feel that teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard. As a result, nearly all feel their children are making good progress. Nearly all parents feel their children are becoming more mature, taking on responsibilities and are encouraged to be healthy. All parents feel there is a good range of activities in school and nearly all feel that the homework given is appropriate. Nearly all parents state that their children are treated fairly and receive enough additional support with their individual learning needs. Most parents state that pupils are well prepared to move on to their next school.

Nearly all parents state that school staff are approachable if they have concerns or questions, and they feel they are well informed about their children's progress. Nearly all parents feel that pupils behave well in school. Nearly all parents are clear about what to do if they need to raise issues with the school or to make a complaint.

All of these views are in line with or better than the views of parents in other schools across Wales. Parents in Townhill Community School are more positive about being well informed about their children's progress, the school's procedures for dealing with concerns or complaints, and the range of activities and trips available for pupils.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mike Maguire	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Honour	Team Inspector
Terry Williams	Team Inspector
Elizabeth Hall	Lay Inspector
Peter Morris	Peer Inspector
Mr Brown (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)

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.