



*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**

**Trehopcyn Primary School  
Plymouth Road  
Hopkinstown  
Pontypridd  
CF37 2RH**

**Date of inspection: June 2012**

**by**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Context

Trehopcyn Primary School is situated in the former mining community of Hopkinstown, in the Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority. It serves a community, which has a mixture of privately owned and housing association rented properties. The school admits pupils aged three to 11 years old and there are currently 125 pupils on roll. Most pupils come from a British white background with a very small number coming from ethnic minority groups. A minority of pupils comes from outside the catchment area.

Approximately 33% of statutory age pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are no pupils from homes where Welsh is spoken as the first language. Approximately 3% of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school admits pupils with the full range of abilities. The school identifies around 23% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need.

The current headteacher was appointed in January 2007.

The school was last inspected in May 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Trehopcyn Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,880 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £6,499 and the minimum is £2,788. Trehopcyn Primary School is 30th out of the 114 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school and achieve well;
- many pupils achieve good standards of literacy skills in lessons;
- pupils' performance at the higher levels (Level 3 and 5) compares well with that of other similar schools;
- the standard of pupils' wellbeing is good;
- the quality of most teaching is good;
- the provision for Welsh and the Welsh dimension is good; and
- assessment procedures are effective and enable pupils to receive the support they need.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is a general upward trend in the standards achieved by pupils over the past three years;
- the school improvement plan identifies clear intended outcomes that focus on raising standards and developing provision; and
- the school has a positive team ethos and willingness to further drive improvement and raise standards.

## Recommendations

In order to improve school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in English at the end of key stage 2, with particular attention to improving the achievement of boys;
- R2 ensure that planned activities consistently match the needs of all learners;
- R3 strengthen the role of the senior management team; and
- R4 ensure that the recently developed processes of pupil tracking and targeted intervention contribute to raising pupil standards in all areas.

### **What happens next?**

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make good or better than expected progress during their time at Trehopcyn Primary School. Standards in lessons and in pupils' books are good, and pupils generally achieve at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability.

Many pupils achieve good standards of literacy skills. However, progress in English in key stage 2 is uneven. In lessons, and informally around the school, pupils engage in extended conversation using appropriate vocabulary. Many older pupils are confident speakers and communicate clearly to a variety of audiences. Progress in reading is good. Foundation Phase pupils have an appropriate sight vocabulary and use a range of simple strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Older pupils read fluently, with the most able pupils achieving very high standards by the end of key stage 2. These pupils can use their reading skills well to research and enhance their own learning. Most pupils write well and accurately. In the Foundation Phase, older pupils write confidently for a wide range of purposes. Many spell simple words correctly and are starting to use punctuation accurately. By the end of key stage 2 most pupils use paragraphs and descriptive language well to write poems, stories, letters and recounts. Throughout the school, girls apply their reading and writing skills with more confidence than boys across the full range of subjects.

Over the last three years, there has been a general upward trend in the number of pupils achieving the expected level (level 2) or above in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. When compared to the performance of schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals and the family, the school's performance has improved well, particularly in English and mathematics.

In key stage 2 there has been a general upward trend in performance at the expected level (level 4) over the past four years in English and mathematics. This improvement has been further built upon in this year's end of key stage statutory teacher assessments. Standards observed in lessons and books during the inspection verified this further improvement. However, despite improving trends, the school's performance, at the expected level, does not generally compare well to that in other similar schools, particularly in English. Over the past five years, girls performed better than boys by a significant margin in English, specifically in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2.

Performance at above the higher level (level 5+) in English, mathematics and science compares well with that of the family and other similar schools.

Most pupils speak, read and write Welsh at an appropriate level and at the end of key stage 2 they can talk confidently about familiar topics within the classroom and in informal situations.

Pupils with additional learning needs make consistently good progress in their learning and achieve their potential, and those who are entitled to free school meals

generally achieve on a par with other pupils. Pupils who learn English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress against their individual targets.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils behave well across the school, are courteous to adults and get on very well with one another. Nearly all feel safe within the school, especially from physical and verbal abuse, and know whom to go to if they are worried or need help. Pupils also demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle and how to achieve it.

Most pupils take responsibility for their own actions. They are proud of the positions of responsibility that they have within the school such as house captains and play leaders. They carry out their roles well.

Foundation Phase pupils make decisions about what and how they learn in the classroom. Older pupils also have a say about the topics they study. Pupils are effectively involved in whole school decision-making through various groups and committees such as the sports council and healthy schools group.

Nearly all pupils co-operate well in a good range of activities. They support one another in their learning effectively and work well in pairs and small groups. Many pupils show a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve their own performance.

Attendance, at around 93% so far this year, is above that of similar schools. All but a very few pupils arrive punctually in the mornings. No pupils have been excluded in the last five years.

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

The school provides a rich and varied range of learning experiences through a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. These experiences engage and stimulate most pupils and enable them to build successfully on their previous learning. A good range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest, in the locality and further afield, enhances pupils' learning experiences.

The school plans well to develop pupils' skills across all areas of the curriculum. There are well planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy, thinking skills in all subjects, although the overuse of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum. Teachers plan carefully for the use of information and communication technology skills but these plans are not always fully implemented within lessons.

Provision for the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is good and enables pupils to make good progress. Bilingualism and incidental Welsh are strong features throughout the curriculum.

The school is at an early stage in developing awareness of sustainability through its eco committee and curriculum planning. The school promotes global citizenship effectively across the curriculum and through its links with other countries.

### **Teaching: Good**

Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons carefully and learning outcomes are shared with all pupils. Teachers and support staff have positive working relationships with pupils and expectations are generally high. All staff have good subject knowledge and use a range of activities, equipment and resources appropriately to challenge most pupils. In lessons observed, most teaching motivates pupils and, as a result, they make good progress. In a minority of lessons, activities do not match the abilities of all pupils well enough.

Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and thoroughly. As a result, teachers understand the needs of their pupils and identify how to move them on to the next stage in their learning. The school is developing a whole school tracking system and, although it is relatively new it is already having a positive impact planning. Pupils' work is marked consistently and, in the best practice, teachers' written comments help pupils to improve the standard of their work. Pupils have a growing awareness of how to improve their own learning and are beginning to be involved in evaluating their own progress.

Parents receive detailed annual reports and are well informed about their children's achievements. These are clear and informative and include targets for improvement.

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

There are good arrangements for the promotion of healthy living and pupils' wellbeing, which are appreciated by nearly all pupils and parents. Learning experiences throughout the school support pupils' personal development effectively, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school promotes good behaviour and school attendance well through incentives such as house points and awards.

The school identifies pupils that need additional support at an early stage and provides appropriate and extended programmes to meet their needs. Staff work closely with external agencies and, as a result, the quality of care and support for these pupils is effective. The school consults parents and involves them increasingly in the regular review of individual education plans. Teachers and support staff use a wide range of specific interventions well to target small groups of pupils and these schemes are improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive environment which offers an equality of opportunity in everything it provides. Prevention and elimination of oppressive behaviour are fundamental to the school ethos, as is the development of tolerance. The nature of the building does not allow full access to those with mobility difficulties, but there is a detailed accessibility plan to address these limitations.



The building and grounds are well maintained and meet the needs of pupils well. Classrooms are of appropriate sizes and effective use is made of other rooms around the school. Wall and artefact displays are of a high quality and help create a very positive learning environment. The provision of fruit and vegetable garden areas in the Foundation Phase and infant playgrounds is particularly notable. There is also a good supply of learning resources appreciated by pupils. The school's two libraries are particularly well resourced.

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

Overall, leadership is generally effective. Although the senior management team has been strengthened recently and is beginning to provide a purposeful and well focused lead to staff, its role in strategic leadership is not yet fully embedded. Leaders have been successful in identifying priorities for improvement and in putting in place a wide range of appropriate initiatives to raise standards. However, these processes and the initiatives are relatively new and have not had enough time to impact fully on raising standards.

The headteacher has worked effectively to develop a positive ethos in which all staff have a strong commitment to working together to raise attainment. Subject co-ordinators are now more involved in monitoring standards and supporting colleagues. All staff have relevant and up-to-date job descriptions that relate well to their roles and responsibilities.

The governing body are well informed and are very committed to the school. As part of a well organised and established programme many governors are regular visitors to the school. As a result, they have a good understanding of the needs of the school. They discharge their role as a critical and supportive friend well.

Currently the school is making good progress in addressing local and national priorities, for example in raising standards in literacy, numeracy and in Welsh.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The headteacher and senior management team have successfully begun to foster a culture of self-evaluation which involves all staff, governors, parents and pupils. This includes regular reviews based on analysis of information about the performance of pupils, the progress they make and the impact of recent initiatives. A particular strength is the way in which staff are reviewing their teaching approaches and sharing their expertise.

The school development plan accurately reflects the areas for improvement identified through the self-evaluation process. It has clear objectives and ways of judging success. It is used effectively as a working document to assess the impact of initiatives, for example to improve pupils' writing. Identified priorities are costed carefully.

The school is an effective learning community which is based on a shared culture of professional discussion and cooperation. This has been strengthened further through contacts with other schools locally and within the family. All staff are supported well in terms of their continuous professional development.

There has been good progress in addressing nearly all of the recommendations of the previous inspection.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has good partnerships with parents which has produced significant benefits in terms of improved standards and wellbeing for many pupils. For instance, 'Family Learning' programs have been particularly successful in helping parents to support their children's early learning.

The school makes effective use of local authority services, some of which are based on the site, for raising standards. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievements, particularly in improving their literacy skills.

Links with local schools are strong and mutually beneficial. Examples of effective partnership working include cluster meetings to agree the accuracy of assessments made on transfer to secondary education and the joint funding of a Welsh language teacher to raise pupil standards in Welsh.

There are growing links with other schools in the family, for example to examine ways of improving pupils' writing.

### **Resource management: Good**

The headteacher and governing body manage the budget well. Expenditure is monitored regularly and the impact of spending is reviewed carefully. Leaders are resourceful in the way in which they generate additional funds from the use of the site during the year.

The teachers have appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum effectively. Support assistants are deployed thoughtfully across the school and work closely with other staff. There are well managed arrangements to provide teachers with time for preparation, planning and assessment. This is having a positive impact on standards, particularly in music and art.

There are appropriate performance management systems in place. The induction arrangements for children beginning school and for those moving on to secondary education are good.

The school has reviewed its management structure in line with the national workload agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' to ensure that its system is effective.

Bearing in mind the standards and progress pupils achieve and the quality of education provided, the school gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care. One pupil's results can have a significant impact on the school's performance.

The school's performance in 2011, when compared to that of its family of schools, shows that it performs at a much higher level than expected at the end of key stage 1. It performs at around the expected level for mathematics and science at the end of key stage 2. However it performs below the expected level for English and the core subject indicator.

Many pupils enter the school with skills in literacy and numeracy in line with the local authority average. By the age of seven, at the end of key stage 1, many pupils have made good progress. Most pupils attain the expected level (level 2), in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Pupil attainment at the end of key stage 1 is above of the average for schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards attained by pupils in English and the core subject indicator place the school in the highest 25% of similar schools. Performance in mathematics and science places the school in the higher 50% of similar schools.

Over the past three years, attainment at the higher level (level 3) in all subjects has steadily improved and is above the averages for the family and Wales. Pupil attainment has moved to the highest 25% of that for similar schools for mathematics and science and the higher 50% of that for similar schools for English.

At the end of key stage 2 teacher assessments over the last three years show a general upward trend in pupil performance in English, mathematics and science, and in the core subject indicator at the expected level (level 4). However, despite this improvement, pupil performance data at the expected level does not compare well with that of schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Pupil performance for the past three years has placed the school in the lowest 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals.

Results at the higher level (level 5) in English, mathematics and science have steadily improved over the past three years moving from the bottom 25% to the upper 50% of results for schools with similar levels of free school meals. Outcomes at this level compare well in relation to national, local and family benchmarks. Pupil performance at the higher level is above the family of schools' average and the school attains above its expected position within the group.

In 2011 in key stage 1, boys outperformed girls in all subjects and performed far better than boys in the same family of schools and better than the Welsh average. In key stage 2 in 2011, girls outperformed boys in gaining the core subject indicator, English and mathematics at the expected level. The gap between boys' and girls' performance in key stage 2 was greater than the family and all-Wales averages.

Over five years, girls consistently outperformed boys in performance at the expected level in English in key stage 2.

Almost all pupils in receipt of free school meals make very good progress in both key stages. Most pupils identified with additional learning needs make at least the expected progress and a few do even better.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

Sixty-four pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire.

Overall, learner responses to the questionnaires were positive and in line with or above national benchmarks in terms of their level of satisfaction with aspects of the school. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they know who to talk to if they were worried or upset. All pupils say that there are lots of chances for exercise, that school teaches them to be healthy and that they know what to do and who to ask if they need help with their work.

Nearly all pupils say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work, although this is slightly below the national benchmark of 95%.

#### **Responses to parent/carers questionnaires**

Thirty-one parents or carers completed the questionnaire.

All parents:

- feel that their child was helped to settle in well;
- believe that their child is expected to do his/her best; and
- think that homework is appropriate;

Nearly all parents:

- say that their child likes school and is making good progress;
- feel that teaching is good;
- think their child is safe at school, well supported and encouraged to keep healthy;
- feel comfortable about approaching the school with any suggestions or problems; and
- think that pupils receive appropriate additional support and that they are kept well informed about their child's progress.

A number of the parental responses to the questionnaire were below national benchmarks.

Many parents feel that pupils behave well in school. This response was below the national benchmark of 96%.

Many parents feel that there is a good range of activities including trips and visits.

Many parents feel that the school is well run. Responses were significantly below the national benchmark of 96%.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **The inspection team**

Sarah Hurst AI	Reporting Inspector
Peter Mathias	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Peter Curnow	Peer Inspector
Lyn Williams	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

### Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

## **Glossary of terms – Primary**

### **National Curriculum**

#### **Expected National Curriculum levels**

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

#### **Core subject indicator in all key stages**

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

#### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.