



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

**Bryn Primary School
Forest Hill
The Bryn
Pontllanfraith
Blackwood
NP12 2PL**

Date of inspection: February 2013

by

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



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

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

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

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

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

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

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Context

Bryn Primary School is in Pontllanfraith near Blackwood. It provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. The local authority is Caerphilly. There are 229 pupils on roll, including 39 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Pupils enter the nursery in the term before their third birthdays.

Approximately 9% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below local and national averages. This figure has doubled in the last four years. About 11% of pupils are considered to have additional educational needs, including a very few pupils with statements of special educational needs. These figures are also below local and national averages.

Ninety-seven per cent of pupils come from white British backgrounds. No pupil speaks Welsh at home or speaks English as an additional language. About 57% of pupils come from outside the local area and from homes, which are generally neither advantaged nor disadvantaged financially or socially.

A very few pupils were temporally excluded in the previous year. There are a very few pupils who are 'looked-after' by the local authority. The school was last inspected in the spring term 2007. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

During the inspection, three members of the teaching staff were engaged on a temporary basis due to staff absence including ill health and maternity leave. In total four teachers joined the school in September 2012.

The individual school budget per pupil for Bryn Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £2,797 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Bryn Primary School is the 60th out of the 75 primary schools in Caerphilly 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 at Bryn Primary School is good because:

- many pupils achieve high standards;
- nearly all pupils make good progress;
- the curriculum is wide and interesting;
- pupils behave well and work hard;
- teaching and assessment for learning are consistently good; and
- pupils with additional learning needs receive good support.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement at Bryn Primary School are good because:

- the headteacher provides a strong and purposeful lead;
- all staff share a common commitment to further improvement;
- the school's assessment procedures are well used; and
- the school's self-evaluation is accurate and well constructed.

Recommendations

R1 Improve the relative performance of boys compared to girls at the higher levels in the national teacher assessments of 11-year-olds

R2 Raise standards in Welsh by the end of key stage 2

R3 Provide more opportunities on a planned basis for all pupils to use the full range of available resources in information communications technology (ICT)

R4 Increase governors' awareness of the day-to-day life of the school and the quality of teaching and learning taking place

What happens next?

The Bryn Primary School will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils have very good listening skills. In the Foundation Phase most pupils speak clearly and confidently and take turns well when talking to each other. As pupils move through key stage 2, they use a rich and interesting choice of words and express their ideas clearly.

Most pupils in reception make appropriate progress in learning letters and sounds, enabling them to develop early reading skills well. Most pupils' reading develops well through the Foundation Phase, and this good progress continues throughout key stage 2. In classes in upper key stage 2, most pupils read with increasing fluency, accuracy and expression. Many speak enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors.

Pupils make good progress in writing as they move through the school. From the upper Foundation Phase classes, they write neatly and show a good understanding of sentence formation and punctuation. Through key stage 2, many pupils write well in a range of styles and for different purpose. They enjoy using such complex vocabulary as 'a plethora of pollutants is spoiling water quality'. Many pupils are confident in using their good literacy skills in most aspects of the curriculum. Most pupils make good progress in developing skills in numeracy and ICT.

Most pupils are enthusiastic about learning the Welsh language. In the Foundation Phase they begin to acquire a working vocabulary that allows them to describe themselves, their surroundings and their likes and dislikes. Most older pupils do not make the expected progress, so that by upper key stage 2 their lack of fluency restricts their ability to converse in Welsh.

Starting often from a lower than expected base, nearly all pupils make good progress during their time in the school. Pupils' performance in the Foundation Phase assessments at seven years of age in 2012 was generally below the average for the family of schools and in comparison to schools locally and nationally at the expected level (outcome 5+).

In language, literacy and communication, results at the higher level (outcome 6+) were above these averages, as they were in mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

In the national teacher assessments for 11-year-olds, results were above family, local and national averages at the expected level (level 4+) and at the higher level (level 5+) in English, mathematics and science. A particular strength was in science where all pupils reached at least the expected standard.

When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, results were generally above 50% of those schools.

Over the last four years, results in the national teacher assessments for 11-year-olds have been high, except in 2011 when results dipped to broadly in line with family, local and national averages.

The difference in performance of boys compared to girls at 11 years of age is generally greater than the difference found between boys and girls in the family of schools, and in local and national data.

By 11 years of age, the standards of pupils entitled to free school meals, while below those of those pupils who are not eligible, is broadly in line with family, local and national figures. Nearly all pupils identified with additional learning needs and those who are more able make at least the progress it would be reasonable to expect of them.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils have a good understanding of the reasons to eat healthily and have an active lifestyle. They are keen to participate in the wide range of sporting and cultural experiences available to them. Nearly all pupils are happy, feel safe in school and know whom to turn to with any concerns.

All pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work and they work collaboratively to achieve their targets. They are keen to engage in class discussions and most pupils are motivated to learn.

The development of decision-making skills and pupil representation are very strong features of the school. Pupils are keen to accept positions of responsibility. The development of the school ambassadors in conducting the interviews for staff is an example of innovative practice that has successfully developed many pupils' maturity, leadership and evaluative skills. The ambassadors have a clear focus on improving learning experiences for pupils and seek the views of their peers through questionnaires. They manage a budget and they carry out their roles conscientiously and with diligence.

The school and eco councils fulfil their roles effectively by improving the wellbeing of pupils through promoting healthier living and acting sustainably. Staff act upon pupils' ideas and develop them through a variety of action plans.

In the previous school year, attendance was 94%. This was below the attendance levels of 75% of similar schools and below the family average. Overall, punctuality is good although a few of the younger pupils are regularly late. Standards of behaviour across the school are good. Nearly all pupils show respect, care and concern for all within the school environment.

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

In the Foundation Phase, pupils engage in a range of stimulating activities, indoors and outdoors. There is a good balance between activities that are of child-led and

those that teachers direct. In key stage 2, work is planned in topics, such as the Second World War, that engage the interest of all pupils. Teachers plan lessons methodically so that pupils learn skills in English and mathematics lessons, and then use them as part of their topic work.

There are good ranges of after school activities, which are well supported by pupils. A programme of local visits, for example to Caerphilly Castle, enriches pupils' experiences, as do visits from such people as a local councillor and recently the BBC's weatherman. The school does not make best use of opportunities to teach about the culture and history of Wales.

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It satisfies the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the National Curriculum and meets the needs of most pupils appropriately. Many of the learning experiences provided are interesting and challenging. However, in ICT, opportunities are missed to put the planning into effect and to ensure that all pupils experience the whole of the curriculum in this subject.

The provision for the development of pupils' understanding of sustainability is strength of the school. The eco council provides a strong lead for pupils' activities in the school allotment and in acting sustainably. This has had a positive impact in the way the school uses energy. While pupils engage in charitable fundraising and are developing an awareness of fair-trade, there are more limited opportunities to develop awareness of their role as global citizens.

Teaching: Good

Across the school teachers and pupils work together constructively. Teachers plan carefully to make their lessons interesting and relevant to their pupils' different needs. Teachers in the Foundation Phase provide all pupils with many worthwhile opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills through well-organised practical activities.

In the best lessons, there is a very clear sense of purpose where all pupils are fully aware of what is expected of them. The teachers work enthusiastically with their pupils, sharing ideas readily and encouraging pupils.

Teachers consistently review pupils' progress and encourage all pupils to be self-critical. They recognise warmly individual success. They question effectively in order to promote pupils' own reasoning and thinking skills.

All teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of what their pupils should achieve in the lessons. In a small number of lessons, opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to respond appropriately in English and Welsh.

The school makes good use of the detailed, reliable and extensive assessment data it collects to help to raise standards further. This is particularly evident in how it identifies pupils who might benefit from the good range of intervention programmes in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff carefully assess the impact of these programmes on standards and progress.

All teachers mark pupils' work very constructively and provide detailed guidance on how pupils should improve their work. Pupils also regularly and effectively assess their own progress honestly and maturely and set realistic learning targets for themselves.

Annual reports to parents are detailed and provide a balance record of pupils' individual progress. The reports meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes healthy living and pupils' wellbeing successfully through a wide range of initiatives and policies designed to promote pupils' health, wellbeing and social development. Particular strengths in this provision are the arrangements to promote pupils' social skills and their understanding of their responsibilities to themselves and to each other. There are very good arrangements for pupils to express their views about their school and to realise their responsibilities in the local community.

There are appropriate systems in place to monitor punctuality and attendance. These have been successful recently in raising attendance levels.

There are good arrangements to promote pupils' moral development through discussions and in dedicated personal and social education lessons. The school has good arrangements to promote pupils' social development through effective curriculum opportunities during and after school. Acts of collective worship meet requirements. However, they often under-emphasise the spiritual dimension to life and there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to reflect and to consider wider issues.

The school has extensive links with a wide range of specialist services, which are well used. There are thorough systems to identify and track pupils in need of specialist provision. The school carefully monitors pupils' responses and regularly reviews the impact of support services. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Provision for the support of pupils with additional learning needs is a strength of the school. The additional learning needs co-ordinator is very effective and gives good advice and provides systems which ensure that the help is beneficial and meets the needs of these pupils. Parents are well informed and participate fully in reviewing their child's progress.

Learning environment: Good

Overall, the school has a good range of learning resources that match pupils' needs. Pupils are fully involved in identifying and sourcing additional resources where necessary.

The school has a positive and supportive ethos. It is a very calm and well-ordered community, in which all pupils are encouraged to develop and thrive as individuals. Most pupils are eager to take on responsibilities such as Helpwr Heddiw and library

monitors. All pupils have equal access to the school's provision. The school celebrates diversity well through, for example, Chinese New Year.

The building has been adapted successfully and refurbished to overcome the lack of space in some of the classrooms. The whole building and site is kept secure, clean and well maintained. The outdoor space, including the allotment, hen enclosure and wildlife areas, is a stimulating environment that is well used to enhance learning.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future development of the school and a strong commitment to continuous improvement. She has been very successful in developing amongst all staff a positive attitude to change and a willingness to work supportively and constructively together.

The roles of subject co-ordinators are well developed and they are having a significant impact on standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy. All teachers make very good use of assessment information to identify how to improve the impact of teaching and learning. They work cohesively in teams and as individuals.

The governing body is well informed about standards and the school's comparative performance. Governors are supportive of the senior management team and share their commitment to raising standards further by providing appropriate levels of challenge. They have a good understanding of the longer-term needs of the school and plan carefully to meet them.

Governors hold the senior management team properly to account. However, many are not fully aware of how the school functions and the quality of teaching and learning occurring on a day-to-day basis. The school has correctly identified the need to strengthen the links between the governing body and the staff as a whole.

The school has made good progress in addressing local and national priorities. The Foundation Phase is well established. The school gives considerable emphasis to implementing strategies to raise standards further in literacy and numeracy.

Improving quality: Good

The school has developed its self-evaluation process extensively over the last three years and now involve all those connected with the school. This process is well supported through seeking the views of pupils, parents and staff. However, there are few opportunities for governors to contribute to the reviews from their first-hand experience in the school.

The school development plan accurately reflects the school's current needs. The priorities for both teaching and support staff link closely to the school's targets. It is comprehensive, well thought out document that all staff and governors understand and implement appropriately.

The school is developing a culture of sharing good practice both within school and beyond through participation in several professional learning communities. These have impacted positively in developing the professional capacity of staff and a culture for sharing expertise.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a wide range of useful partnerships. Parents are generally supportive and appreciate the efforts the school makes to keep them informed. The parent teacher association raises additional funds that have provided such additional resources as wireless laptop computers and books for the reading scheme. Links with business in the neighbourhood have increased opportunities for pupils to use for example design software and to appreciate its use in real life.

There are strong links with other primary and secondary schools in the locality. Teachers from these schools meet frequently to develop good practice. Good use is made of resources such as when sharing the costs of training events. Recently there has been effective work with other schools, including schools in the family of schools and local schools, as well as the secondary school to which most pupils transfer, to agree standards.

Resource management: Good

The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and learning support assistants to deliver the curriculum well and to ensure the wellbeing of all pupils. It deploys staff efficiently and makes good use of individual expertise.

The school's arrangements for managing the performance of all staff link effectively to the school's priorities. Teachers have benefited from the training provided. Teachers have appropriate time to plan, prepare and assess work. This is helping to raise standards. The school has carefully considered the implications of the national agreement on "Raising Standards and Tackling Workload" and responded appropriately.

Spending is carefully linked to supporting school improvement priorities and a deficit budget is being addressed successfully.

In view of the good progress made by most pupils by the end of key stage 2, the quality of education provided and the use of available funds, the school gives value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Pupils' performance in 2012 in the end of the Foundation Phase assessments at seven years of age was generally below family, local and national averages at the expected level (outcome 5+). This was broadly in line with the assessments made when these pupils entered the school in the nursery and in reception. However, these standards were not reflected in the work seen during the inspection in Foundation Phase 2 where standards were well above these averages.

At the higher level (outcome 6+), pupils' standards were above the family, local and national averages in English, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. However, in these assessments at both outcome 5+ and outcome 6+, the performance of boys was below that of girls. This was particularly so at outcome 6+ where the gap was wider than between boys and girls in the family, locally and nationally.

When compared to schools with a similar proportion of free school meals, the school's performance placed it in the lowest 25% in all assessed areas of learning at outcome 5+ and when these results were combined.

In key stage 2 over the past four years, pupils' performance at the expected level (level 4+) in English, mathematics and science and when the results were combined has been generally above family, local and national averages. An exception was in 2011 when results fell to in line with these averages. This was related to a larger than usual proportion of pupils identified with additional learning needs. In that year, as in previous years, nearly all pupils made at least the progress it would have been reasonable to expect of them.

Pupils' performance in 2012 improved to match the previous trend at level 4+. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, results in 2012 generally placed the school above 50% of these schools and the results in science placed it well above 75% of these schools.

In key stage 2, pupils' performance at the higher level (level 5+) in 2012 in English, mathematics and science was above the family, local and national averages. In science results were very high and placed the school above 75% of these schools.

With the exception of 2011, performance over the last few years has been broadly in line with the 2012 results. In 2012 as previously, the performance of boys, particularly at the higher level, was significantly below that of girls in all areas except in science. These differences were greater than those within the family and when compared to local and national figures, although boys overall did relatively better than boys in other schools in the family.

Pupils entitled to free school meals have over the last few years generally performed below those who were not entitled to them. However, this is close to the family, local and national patterns.

Pupils with additional learning needs achieved at least in line with the targets set for them.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Response to parent questionnaires

Fifteen parents or carers completed the questionnaire.

Of the small proportion of parents who responded, in 12 of the 19 questions the responses were less positive on average than the responses from other schools in Wales.

Many parents or carers felt that:

- they were satisfied with the school;
- their child was helped to settle when he or she started at the school;
- the homework given builds well on what children had learnt in school;
- staff treated all children fairly and with respect;
- children were safe in school;
- children received appropriate additional support;
- they were kept well informed about their children's progress;
- they understood the school's procedures for dealing with complaints;
- their children were well prepared for moving on to their next schooling;
- there was a good range of activities including trips or visits; and
- the school was well run.

A majority of parents felt comfortable about approaching the school.

Most parents thought that:

- their children were making good progress; and
- the teaching was good.

All parents felt that:

- staff expected their children to work hard and to do their best;
- children were encouraged to be health and to take regular exercise; and
- the school helped children to become more mature and to take on responsibility.

Response to learner questionnaires

One hundred and nineteen pupils completed the questionnaire. Their responses were similar to those of pupils generally across Wales.

All pupils knew what to do and whom to ask if they were finding their work hard.

Nearly all pupils:

- felt safe in school;
- knew whom to talk to if they were worried or upset;
- thought that they were doing well at school; and
- thought that teachers and adults in the school helped them learn and make progress.

Most pupils thought that:

- the school dealt with bullying effectively;
- there were lots of chances at school for them to get regular exercise; and
- homework helped them to understand and improve their work at school.

Many pupils believed that:

- they had enough books, equipment and computers to do their work;
- other children behaved well and enabled them to get on with their work; and
- nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
Christopher Dolby	Team Inspector
Deirdre Emberson	Lay Inspector
Janet Cresswell	Peer Inspector
Nicola Edwards	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

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

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

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

Glossary of terms – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.