



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

**Ty Isaf Infant & Nursery School
Mill Street
Risca
Gwent
NP11 6EF**

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

Ty Isaf Infant and Nursery School is in the Pontymister area of Risca, near Newport. The local authority is Caerphilly. Most pupils come from the local area, with a few coming from across the authority to attend the school's special educational needs resource base. Pupils generally come from homes that are neither socially nor economically advantaged nor disadvantaged.

Pupil numbers have declined over the last five years. There are currently 128 full-time equivalent pupils on roll between the ages of three and seven, of whom 44 attend the nursery on a part time basis. Six pupils attend the special educational needs resource base.

The school has identified 15% of its pupils as having some degree of additional learning need, including six pupils with statements of special educational need. Approximately 19% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In 2011 this was 30%. No pupil was excluded in the previous 12 months.

Nearly all pupils are from white British homes. No pupil has Welsh as a first language. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language and come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. No pupil is 'looked after' by the local authority.

The last inspection was in the spring term 2007. The current headteacher, who was previously the deputy headteacher, was appointed to the position of headteacher in September 2009. The deputy headteacher was appointed in December 2009. Both have recently returned from maternity leave.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ty Isaf Infant and Nursery School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £4,227 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Ty Isaf Infant and Nursery School is fourth 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 of Ty Isaf Infant and Nursery School is good because:

- nearly all pupils make good progress;
- standards and provision in literacy, numeracy and personal development are good;
- the school supports pupils' wellbeing very effectively;
- pupils with additional learning needs are very well supported; and
- the school provides an exciting and rich working environment for all pupils.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement at Ty Isaf Infant and Nursery School are good because:

- the headteacher and senior management team have a strong sense of purpose and clear vision for future further improvement;
- all staff share a common commitment to high standards;
- the governing body has a very good overview of the school's needs and acts effectively as a critical friend;
- the school's systems for self-evaluation are robust and provide accurate information for future actions; and
- there are effective links between self-evaluation outcomes and school development planning.

Recommendations

R1 Provide more opportunities for pupils to write in Welsh

R2 Strengthen provision in information and communication technology (ICT) in order to develop the full range of pupils skills to a high enough level

R3 Build on existing links with other professional partners and providers to help to continue the process of school development

What happens next?

The Ty Isaf Infant and Nursery 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
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Standards: Good

The baseline assessment of pupils on entry to the school shows that many have knowledge, understanding and skills that are in line with the level for their age. During their time in school, nearly all pupils make good progress from these starting points.

Most pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening and reading skills. Many pupils speak confidently and clearly and read expressively and accurately. They make realistic predictions of what they think will happen next in a story and younger pupils make very good use of illustrations to follow a plot. Many understand the role of the author.

The majority of pupils make extremely good progress in developing their writing skills across all areas of learning. Nearly all pupils' handwriting skills develop well. In Year 2, more able pupils write extended coherent pieces of writing using appropriate punctuation.

Pupils' numeracy skills are good. They use these effectively across the curriculum particularly in the learning areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. The majority of pupils develop their ICT skills appropriately but do not use these skills well enough across all areas of learning.

Standards in Welsh second language in reading and speaking and listening are very good. All pupils understand class instructions given in Welsh and nearly all pupils respond in Welsh confidently and generally accurately. However, their writing in Welsh develops less well, as pupils have limited opportunities to practise this skill.

In 2012, the assessments made at the end of the Foundation Phase placed the school below the average for schools in the family and for other schools locally and nationally in language, literacy and communication and mathematical development. In personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development the school's performance was above the family and Wales.

However, care should be taken when considering these results because they include a small number of pupils who attended the special education resource base for pupils with complex needs.

In the 2012 assessments, boys did not perform as well as girls. This reflected the proportion of boys in the group who had additional and special educational needs. Overall, the gap between the performance of boys and girls was much greater in language, literacy and communication and mathematical development than that found in other schools in the family, locally and nationally. In personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity the difference was in line with those comparators.

Pupils with free school meal did not perform as well as those not receiving them. This difference was close to the family and local figures and better than nationally.

Pupils in the resource base and others identified with additional learning needs made at least the progress it was reasonable to expect. More able pupils achieved well.

From a scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and other evidence, currently standards in classes are above those reported in the 2012 assessments.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils are happy to come to school and know that it is a safe environment where staff will help them, should there be any problems. Most understand the importance of eating healthily and taking good care of their bodies.

The school's attendance has improved and at just over 93% in 2011-2012 was slightly below the family, local, and national averages. Most pupils arrive punctually.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Pupils are well motivated and engage fully in the tasks they are set. Older pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning and try their best to meet the high standards expected of them. Most pupils are developing appropriate skills to improve their own learning and they work willingly with others to solve problems.

The school council is very active and has a good input into decision-making. For example, they were involved in improving the school playground and the outdoor learning areas. Council meetings are very focused and pupils take their own minutes and set targets for themselves. Councillors seek the views of other pupils well.

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

Across the school, teachers plan a good range of very high-quality learning experiences that meet the needs of all pupils successfully. Schemes of work are detailed. They develop pupils' knowledge and understanding progressively so that all pupils build on what they already know and can do.

Weekly curriculum planning sheets are organised very thoughtfully and staff make good use of them to ensure that they meet individual learning needs well. Planning places a very strong and appropriate emphasis on pupils learning through first-hand experiences and using the outdoors.

There is very good provision for the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. A whole school approach to the development of phonics has improved pupils' standards in writing and spelling. Detailed planning is in place for older pupils to apply their research skills in different contexts. Teachers plan regularly to encourage independent and collaborative learning. However, the provision for ICT does not develop the full range of pupils ICT skills to a high enough level.

There is very good provision to encourage pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening and reading in Welsh but planning for writing in Welsh is weaker. Pupils have many beneficial opportunities to learn about their locality and to raise their awareness of the history and culture of Wales. They visit the local area regularly and learn about many Welsh artists, stories and legends including 'The Risca Cuckoo'.

The school's provision for education for sustainable development is good. Pupils understand the reasons why they need to recycle and have good opportunities to learn about the environment. Pupils learn about the lives of others through the school's effective links with Kenya.

Teaching: Good

All staff work together successfully and ensure that all pupils receive the help and support they need to be confident learners. In nearly all lessons, teachers and their assistants question carefully to help pupils to form their own opinions, to think things out for themselves and to make sensible decisions. The lessons are very well resourced and pupils have access to a very good range of stimulating materials and artefacts to help them meet the objectives of the lessons and to make learning fun.

Across the school, teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of the Foundation Phase. They have consistently high expectations of what their pupils should achieve. They take up opportunities well to develop pupils' oral skills in Welsh and English and make their lessons purposeful.

Teachers make their expectations clear and regularly remind pupils about what they need to achieve in the given timeframe. As a result, in nearly all lessons they establish a brisk pace to learning. Teachers review progress and individual success very effectively through purposeful discussions with pupils.

The school makes effective use of extensive assessment systems to track pupil progress rigorously and uses this information very effectively to target appropriate interventions for individuals and groups.

Written feedback to pupils is very detailed and constructive, enabling them to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils are regularly encouraged to assess their own work and set their own targets for improvement which are displayed in classrooms.

Reports to parents and carers are informative and give a clear picture of each pupil's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has good arrangements for promoting healthy living and wellbeing. Pupils are very well known to staff and great care is taken to develop the whole child emotionally and socially. There are simple, consistent rules to foster good behaviour and pupils know the sanctions. All policies relating to health and safety are in place and give appropriate guidance to staff.

There are good arrangements to promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies successfully encourage reflection and contain moral messages. There is good provision for all pupils to learn how to behave responsibly and to consider the needs of others.

The school has established effective links with a range of outside agencies to support pupils' wellbeing and learning. These include the visual and hearing-impaired services, school nurse and educational psychology service.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding in the special needs resource base and is consistently good throughout the rest of the school. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to integrate into and from the resource base. Detailed individual education plans identify appropriate targets that teachers review on a regular basis and involve parents and pupils appropriately.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school offers a safe, welcoming and vibrant environment for all pupils. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils and they are encouraged to participate fully in all activities including an extensive range of extra- curricular activities.

The buildings are of good quality and are very well maintained. It is a very pleasant and welcoming environment where teaching and learning is undertaken very effectively. A particular strength is the quality of outdoor provision, which includes well maintained and attractively planted and grassed areas. There are many well constructed play and investigative areas, which significantly enhance pupils' learning and provide a very rich and varied resource for all children to enjoy and to find learning fun. Within classes there are ample amounts of very good quality resources in all areas of learning.

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

The headteacher and senior management team provide a very positive lead. They share a clear vision for the future of the school and work closely together to achieve their objectives. They have high expectations of themselves and for all staff. The headteacher successfully encourages a very positive commitment from staff to seek to improve standards still further and to continue to develop their own professional skills and practices.

The roles of subject co-ordinators are well established. The co-ordinators systematically review and evaluate the standards achieved in their areas and the quality of teaching and learning. All staff jointly review the impact of major initiatives, such as those in literacy and numeracy, rigorously. They contribute well to discussions on how to improve standards further.

There are appropriate systems in place for the professional development of staff and the management of their performance. The processes are well used to set suitable whole school and individual targets for improvement linked to the school's needs.

The governing body is well led. Many governors have good first-hand knowledge of the school and are particularly well informed. They hold the school to account properly and have a thorough understanding of the standards achieved compared to those of other schools. They are very aware of the school's priorities and the progress of initiatives to meet them. They play an active role in deciding longer-term strategies to enhance further the quality of teaching and learning.

The school makes very good progress in addressing local and national priorities. It has introduced the Foundation Phase successfully and has introduced well-organised initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy and for pupils to be able to assess their own learning confidently and accurately. The school also provides many good opportunities to make pupils aware of conservation and ecological issues.

Improving quality: Good

The school has good procedures in place for self-evaluation through a comprehensive monitoring, evaluating and reviewing process, which is well established. A wide range of first hand evidence, such as classroom observation, scrutiny of pupils' work and reviews by external agencies, informs the process well.

Very effective use is made of data from a wide range of standardised tests and an extensive electronic system to target individuals and groups of learners. This also helps staff to set whole school targets for improvement. All staff contribute to the process and work closely with the senior management team in this.

There is a well-developed and effective link between self-evaluation and improvement planning. Information from the self-evaluation report is expressed in agreed actions in the school development plan and determines priorities for future improvement. The senior management team effectively monitor the progress of these action plans, ensuring consistent implementation across the school.

Teachers take part in a wide range of professional development activities including visits to other schools to observe good practice. Involvements in professional learning communities within the school have been effective, for example to develop phonics. However, links with other providers and partners are relatively new and it is too early for them to impact on teaching and learning.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents and the community are good. The school keeps parents well informed through letters, electronic links and home school books. The school seeks parents' views through regular questionnaires and takes careful note of their views.

There are good links with the community police officer and the local church and chapel and these enhance pupils' moral, social and spiritual development well.

The school has a weekly project where one teacher meets groups of parents to develop projects with pupils at home. This long standing initiative has improved the partnerships between home and school and has helped to improve pupils' standards. The school is developing purposeful links with the local primary for sharing resources and transition, for example in the use of ICT hardware.

Very effective arrangements are in place for pupils leaving the school to ensure continuity in learning and wellbeing. The school works closely with the local primary school to agree standards in the assessment of pupils' work at the end of Foundation Phase.

Resource management: Good

The school prioritises spending very effectively. It reviews the impact of spending carefully for example in developing the stimulating outdoor areas, to ensure that the intended objectives are met.

The school manages teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time very well. Staff who deliver lessons during this time enhance the development of pupils' creative skills through rich and varied activities.

There are regular opportunities for staff to be involved in effective professional development activities. For example, staff worked together effectively to develop a new whole school phonics programme. This programme has helped to raise pupils' standards in spelling and writing. The personal social education plan adopted by the school has had a positive effect on raising pupils' listening and collaborative skills.

All classes are well resourced and the effective deployment of teaching assistants provides very good support for pupils. The school has met the requirements to consider staffing arrangements in line with the national agreement on "Raising Standards and Tackling Workload".

Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. There are many strengths in the school's provision. Overall outcomes for pupils are good. The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Care should be taken when considering the end of Foundation Phase results of seven-year-olds in this school. This is because the school has a special educational needs resource base for pupils with complex needs. In 2012, a small number of these pupils were assessed alongside those in the main school.

In 2012 in language, literacy and communication the school performed below family, local and national averages at outcome 5+ (the expected level) and close to those averages at the higher level (outcome 6+). In mathematical development results at outcome 5+ were below family, local and national averages. At outcome 6+ results were above.

In personal social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity results at outcome 5+ were well above family, local and national averages and close to those averages at the higher level, outcome 6+. The combined results were below the averages.

When the results for those pupils who attended the resource base are discounted, results in language, literacy and communication at outcome 5+ were above family, local and national averages. In mathematics they were close to these averages. In personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity the results were well above these averages. At the higher level, results in language, literacy and communication and mathematical development were above the family, local and national averages. In personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity results were well above these averages.

When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the overall school performance in language, literacy, communication and mathematics at outcome 5+, placed the school below 75% of these schools. At outcome 6 these results placed the school above 50% of similar schools in language, literacy and communication and above 75% in mathematical development. In personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity the school performed above 50% of these schools at outcome 5+ and at outcome 6+. When the results of a small number of pupils attending the resource base are discounted, results improve in all areas as did the Foundation Phase indicator which placed the school above 50% of similar schools.

In 2012, girls achieved relatively better than boys. This reflected the composition of the group and the impact on of those pupils from the resource base. In 2012, pupils not receiving free school meals outperformed those entitled to free school meals. However, the difference is similar to that in other schools in the family and local and national averages. Pupils with additional learning needs and more able pupils achieved at least in line with the targets set for them.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Twenty-four parents responded to the questionnaire. Parents generally had positive views of the school. These were generally in line with parents across Wales.

All felt that:

- they were satisfied with the school;
- their children liked school;
- their children make good progress;
- the teaching was good;
- teachers have high expectations and expect the pupils to work hard;
- their children were encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- their children were safe in school and were well supported;
- the school helps children to become more mature and to take on responsibilities;
- children were well prepared for moving on to the next school;
- there was a good range of activities including trips and visits; and
- the school was well run.

Nearly all parents believed that:

- children were helped to settle in well when they began school;
- pupils behaved well in school;
- homework built well on what pupils had learnt in school; and
- they understood the school procedures for dealing with complaints.

Most parents thought that:

- staff treated all children fairly and with respect; and
- they were well informed about their children's progress.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Rhiannon Boardman	Lay Inspector
Deborah Lambert	Peer Inspector
Mrs 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.