



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

**Litchard Primary School
Garfield Avenue
Litchard Avenue
Bridgend
Mid Glamorgan
CF31 1QB**

Date of inspection: February 2011

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

Litchard Primary School opened in September 2009 following the amalgamation of the former Litchard Infant and Junior Schools. The school has two separate buildings, but building work started recently to provide an administration block and purpose built nursery which will join the two buildings into one.

The school is situated on the northern outskirts of Bridgend and serves the areas of Litchard, Pendre and Wildmill, but 30% of pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. The school provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. Children enter the nursery during the September after their third birthday and attend full-time.

The school describes the majority of its pupils as coming from neither advantaged nor disadvantaged backgrounds. However, a significant minority of pupils come from socially and economically disadvantaged homes. The intake of pupils represents the full ability range, but a significant minority enter the school with below average levels of basic skills.

There are currently 408 pupils on roll, including 51 children of nursery age. The total number on roll remains fairly constant, but there is relatively high pupil mobility during the school year, usually linked to the relocation or re-housing of families and short term contracts for parents who work at the local hospital.

Approximately 30% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is well above the local authority and all-Wales average of just under 20%. All pupils speak English at home and no pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Pupils are taught through the medium of English and Welsh is taught as a second language.

Ninety-seven per cent of pupils are of white British ethnic origin. Approximately 42% are on the school's register of special educational needs and two have statements of special educational needs. The school also has a class for pupils with moderate learning difficulties from across Bridgend. This class currently has 19 pupils on the register who have been diagnosed as having a wide range of additional learning needs. Ten pupils are currently looked after by the local authority.

The current headteacher has been in post since the school amalgamated in September 2009. Prior to that, he had been headteacher of the junior school since 2001 and became acting head of the infant school in January 2008 when the previous headteacher retired. The school has an acting deputy headteacher.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Litchard Primary is £2,967, which compares with a maximum of £4,826 and a minimum of £2,758 for primary schools in Bridgend. The school has the 43rd highest budget per pupil out of the 52 primary schools in Bridgend.

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 during their time at the school;
- pupils have positive attitudes to learning;
- the abilities, talents and opinions of all pupils are valued and respected;
- the quality of teaching and support for pupils is good; and
- all staff are committed to the aims of the school and work very hard to provide a wide range of interesting experiences for pupils.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher, acting deputy head and governing body have provided strong leadership and management throughout the period of the recent amalgamation and built a firm foundation for the future of the school;
- senior leaders share a common vision and agreed values which are understood by all staff;
- the school has a successful track record of managing change which has brought about improvement over time; and
- there are appropriate systems in place for all staff and stakeholders to be involved in reviewing progress and identifying areas for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

R1 improve standards of pupils' writing in the Foundation Phase and key stage 1;

R2 increase the level of challenge for all pupils by developing thinking and independent learning skills;

R3 improve the use of formative and summative assessment as a tool to move pupils forward in their learning; and

R4 strengthen the role of the senior leadership team to ensure a more coherent and strategic approach to whole school issues.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

A significant minority of pupils enter the nursery and reception classes with lower than average basic skills. Despite this, most make steady progress from their starting points throughout the school and achieve well by the age of 11.

Over the past three years, outcomes in English, mathematics and science for pupils at the age of seven at the end of key stage 1 have been in the lower half of those for schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, for 11-year-olds at the end of key stage 2 over the same period, results are nearly always in the top 50% of these schools' outcomes.

In 2010, when compared to those of other schools in its family, key stage 1 teacher assessment outcomes for English, mathematics and science are just below the family average. Levels of writing at the age of seven are significantly below average. However, in 2010, pupils' attainment in all three core subjects at the end of key stage 2 compares very well with attainment in other schools in the family. The percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator, that is at least level 4 in English, mathematics and science, is the highest in the family.

At both key stages, girls achieve better than boys overall. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 at the age of seven and level 5 at the age of 11 is about average, although more boys than girls attain the higher levels in mathematics and science. At key stage 1, there is a significant gap between the attainment of pupils who receive free school meals and those who do not. This is greater than the family of schools average. However, by the end of key stage 2, this gap has narrowed significantly.

In the sessions observed during the inspection, most pupils make good progress and apply their learning to a range of contexts. Many pupils with additional learning needs, including those in the moderate learning difficulty class, make appropriate progress and, over time, achieve appropriately from low starting points. However, more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

Most pupils speak, read and write competently and use their literacy skills effectively to access all areas of the curriculum. Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are good and older pupils, in particular, use laptop computers and digital video cameras very proficiently to enhance their learning and to make high quality presentations. For example, Year 5 pupils record one another performing poetry and use these recordings effectively to evaluate their performances. Key stage 2 pupils' learning logs demonstrate good standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, in line with pupils' age and ability.

Standards in Welsh language are appropriate in the Foundation Phase. Most pupils respond well to instructions and answer simple, familiar questions, such as "ydyn ni'n

barod?" In key stage 2, pupils write about a range of topics, using simple vocabulary and sentence patterns. However, the use of Welsh outside Welsh lessons is limited.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils feel safe in school and have positive attitudes to healthy living. They understand the importance of diet and physical activity and this is demonstrated by the high attendance at the extensive sports activities that the school provides.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and participate enthusiastically in all aspects of school life. Behaviour is very good, both within classes and at break and lunchtimes. All pupils are polite and courteous, and they show respect for one another. Most co-operate well and take responsibility for their actions.

Members of the school council and eco committee take their roles very seriously. The school council has a clear constitution and a development plan which guides its work effectively. Pupils feel that adults take their views into account when making decisions. For example, a meeting with the architect who designed the school extension resulted in the inclusion of improved changing facilities for the school swimming pool. There are good channels of communication between members of the school council and other pupils. This ensures that everyone feels involved in decision-making.

Attendance, at 92%, is adequate, despite the efforts of the school and good support from the educational welfare officer. Most significant absences can be attributed to a few families and those who take holiday during term time.

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

The curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating learning experiences which meet the needs of most pupils. Detailed planning by teachers ensures that there is some flexibility to respond to pupils' interests and topical events, such as the rescue of Chilean miners. The curriculum enables pupils to move systematically on from what they already know and can do. There are appropriate personalised programmes for pupils with specific needs.

Planning for the development of skills in communication, numeracy, ICT and thinking is particularly well developed in history and education for sustainable development and global citizenship. There is excellent provision for pupils to learn about acting sustainably and to help them understand their role in the wider world. This has resulted in the school achieving its second Green Flag award. Pupils have good opportunities to compare life in Wales with life in several other countries through receiving visitors from those countries. Pupils have a well-developed sense of the world in which they live through their support of charities abroad and communication with children who live elsewhere and detailed project work. The school has recently gained an International Schools Award for its comprehensive work in this field.

Provision for the Welsh language is generally good, although the use of Welsh by staff is not consistent throughout the school. All pupils gain a broad understanding of life in Wales and Welsh culture through the provision of a wide range of interesting and relevant activities. There is a good variety of extra-curricular activities including sport, music, gardening and reading available to pupils, and these are well attended.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use an appropriate range of approaches to engage and challenge most pupils. They provide consistently good support and encouragement and give pupils useful feedback on what they have done well. Teachers use open-ended questions effectively to promote discussion and to make links to previous learning. In the best lessons, there are suitable opportunities for pupils to take some responsibility for their own learning. In these lessons, teachers successfully promote the use of pupils' thinking skills to predict outcomes, reason and make decisions. They also encourage pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. However, teachers do not always allow enough opportunity for all pupils to develop their thinking and independent learning skills.

Teachers use a wide range of resources skilfully to enhance learning. This includes the effective use of technology such as the interactive whiteboard to stimulate pupils' interest. They make very good use of the community and visitors to enrich the curriculum for pupils and to provide opportunities to learn from first-hand experience. Adult support is usually well focussed to support those who need more help and to enable pupils to access all activities.

Staff manage behaviour very well and establish good working relationships that encourage learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they identify clear learning outcomes in their planning. Lessons are well structured and most move on at an appropriate pace. Teachers provide purposeful homework regularly and the "Learning Logs" initiative helps pupils to apply the skills they learn in the classroom at home with parental support.

Teachers and support staff assess progress through a wide range of standardised tests, observation and levelling and this provides staff with a large amount of data. An electronic system for recording the outcomes of these assessments improves efficiency and access to this data. However, staff do not always use this information and other assessment information effectively enough to move individuals and groups of pupils on in their learning. Pupils are involved in assessing their understanding of work in many lessons, but this is at a relatively early stage of development. Reports to parents are clear and indicate relevant targets for improvement, and there are regular parent consultation meetings.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Systems to support and guide pupils and their families are efficient and effective. All staff know the pupils well and effectively promote their health and wellbeing. There are extensive arrangements to develop a shared sense of values throughout the school, which includes respect for others, friendship, caring and honesty. These are introduced sensitively in assemblies and reinforced regularly on the playground and

in class work and displays. Staff reward pupils appropriately for demonstrating these values during the school day. There is good provision for enhancing pupils' spiritual development through daily acts of worship and plenty of opportunities in the curriculum to reflect on questions linked to different faiths and beliefs. For example, pupils reflect thoughtfully on the significance of different gods in Hinduism, and write their own marriage vows when re-enacting a wedding.

Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their social and cultural understanding. There is a strong emphasis on the school as part of the wider community. They make visits to places of interest, such as the church, and they interview visitors to develop their understanding of town planning. The active school council and eco-committee give pupils responsibility for specific jobs including recycling, reminding others to save energy and encouraging friendships through the role of "peacemakers" in the playground

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

There is very effective collaborative working with other agencies to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils and the school often takes the initiative in seeking extra support and advice. Support for pupils' individual needs is good, both in the moderate learning difficulties unit and in mainstream classes. Teachers seek the advice of relevant professionals to ensure that individual education plans are appropriate and achievable. Staff track the progress of these pupils carefully and review them with parents regularly. Pupils in the moderate learning difficulties class integrate successfully with pupils across the school and are included fully in the range of activities on offer.

Learning environment: Good

There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos in the school which provides a safe and supportive learning environment based on respect for all. Parents comment favourably on the fact that their children are recognised as individuals.

Children learn about diversity through strong links with other countries. Excellent provision in this area of the school's work enhances pupils' understanding of the need for tolerance and acceptance of different cultures and ways of life very well. Through these activities, children appreciate similarities and differences and the strengths of others. There are procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying which are understood by staff.

The school buildings provide spacious accommodation which is currently being improved as a result of the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools. This work is causing some disruption to the school but this is being well managed. There are extensive grounds and access to a small park and a wooded area next to the school. The buildings are well maintained and displays of children's work are of good quality, enhancing the learning.

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

The leadership of the headteacher, supported by the acting deputy head and the governing body, has had a very positive impact on the school's development. The amalgamation of the previous two schools was managed sensitively and professionally. This ensured that all staff felt that they were part of one school and built firm foundations for future development.

All members of the senior leadership team share the headteacher's vision of a school in which every pupil feels included and achieves to the best of his or her ability. They lead on specific aspects of school life and provision and are committed to making and sustaining improvements for pupils. However, team members' understanding of their responsibility to raise standards of learning and provision at whole school level is under-developed. There is good provision for teachers and support staff to undertake relevant professional development. For example, the headteacher encourages teachers to follow middle level leadership training. This has enabled a few to undertake small-scale classroom research which has improved pupil outcomes in individual classes.

Governors understand their roles and support the school effectively. They understand, and sometimes question, the school's data and are fully aware of school priorities and how they are determined. They contribute appropriately to the school's self-evaluation and have specific meetings to discuss the school development plan. The majority of governors attend relevant training provided by the local authority and provide appropriate feedback to others, enabling them to understand the work of the school more thoroughly.

The school responds well to national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase is improving the skills of younger pupils, the school has a strong focus on improving pupils' literacy skills and the headteacher has been nominated as a systems leader for the School Effectiveness Framework.

Improving quality: Good

School leaders have adopted the best monitoring and evaluation practices of the previous two schools to create a successful process of self-evaluation. They use a wide range of monitoring activities, including listening to learners, observation of lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. As a result, leaders and curriculum co-ordinators have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They take appropriate account of the views of teachers, parents and pupils and consider aspects of provision as well as standards achieved in lessons.

The self-evaluation report accurately identifies the school's strengths and areas for improvement and is based on secure evidence. It is regularly monitored and the headteacher prepares comprehensive reports so that governors have up-to-date information on school progress. Targets in the school development plan link appropriately to the outcomes of self-evaluation. The school identifies priorities well and successfully implements strategies to bring about improvement. However, the

steps for the implementation of strategies are not always detailed enough and do not always focus on specific outcomes for pupils.

Teachers understand the importance of being involved in professional learning communities which are relevant to the needs of the school. Regular team meetings allow staff to share professional knowledge effectively within the school. Teachers work closely with nearby primary schools on a range of curriculum initiatives and are part of the local authority's International School Award team. This has contributed significantly to pupils' very good understanding of diversity and their role in the wider world.

Partnership working: Good

Pupils benefit from strong links with a wide range of multi-disciplinary agencies that share information and develop positive strategies to tackle issues of disadvantage and to support pupils' wellbeing. Most parents feel well informed about school life and their children's progress through newsletters, the school website and regular parents' evenings.

The school works well with its cluster schools and with local secondary schools. Transition plans and activities, including the moderation of end of key stage assessments, focus appropriately on teaching, learning and wellbeing. Occasionally, secondary pupils provide exciting support for pupils in curriculum subjects such as religious education and history. Such activities and very positive partnerships with a wide range of further and higher education institutions provide additional variety to the curriculum which motivates pupils well.

The school works hard to engage parents and the community in the life of the school. Involvement with a range of community groups contributes positively to pupils' learning and wellbeing. The school hosts large-scale sports and cultural events which sometimes involving famous personalities. These often provide inspiration for many pupils and this benefits them in their learning. The school has strong links with the local Communities First group, a nearby church, sports clubs, hospital, businesses and shops, all of which enhance learning in the classroom. For example, the school recently worked with a local supermarket on a science project which led to pupils having a better understanding of the need to store food at the right temperature. The school's links with the Education and Business Partnership are strong and were recognised when it recently won a county award for the second time.

Resource management: Good

The school deploys teaching and support staff appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers make effective use of planning, preparation and assessment time. They have a good understanding of the curriculum, and leaders monitor the provision for their subject areas very well.

Each classroom and curriculum area is well resourced. In lessons observed, appropriate and plentiful equipment, artefacts and resources were available to all pupils and were used purposefully.

The school prioritises its finances well. Spending is usually effectively linked to activities that will have the greatest impact on identified priorities. The school uses additional funding, received through grants, to provide extended opportunities for pupils. Recent funding, for example, provided additional literacy support which improved reading outcomes for a specific group of under-achieving pupils.

In terms of pupils' outcomes and in the use of the budget allocated to it, the school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eleven parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Generally they expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school. Nearly all agreed or agreed strongly with every statement. All parents who responded agree that their children enjoy school and that pupils behave well. Everyone feels that teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of pupils and homework builds well on work done in school. All parents are happy that their children are safe in school and are encouraged to lead healthy lives. They agree that the school is well run and provides plenty of opportunities for trips and visits. Nearly all parents say that the school helped their children to settle when they first started. They feel that their children are making good progress and think that they are kept well informed about their children's achievement. Nearly all feel that the support their children receive for their additional learning needs is appropriate and they feel comfortable to approach staff if they have any questions or concerns. They are confident that the school helps their children to take on responsibility and feel that their children are well prepared for the move to the secondary school. Nearly all understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Sixty-eight pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Most were overwhelmingly positive. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. They feel that bullying is dealt with effectively, and would know whom to talk to when they are worried or upset. Nearly all pupils agree that the school helps pupils to keep healthy and think that there are plenty of chances for them to be physically active. Most feel that they are doing well at school. Nearly all feel that the teachers and support staff help them to progress in their learning. They know what to do if they need help and think that there are enough resources to enable them to learn effectively. Many feel that homework helps them to improve on their work in school. A minority of pupils think that behaviour at playtime and lunch time is not good enough and feel that pupils' behaviour prevents them from getting their work done as well as they could.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Sarah Morgan | Reporting Inspector |
| Liz Miles | Team Inspector |
| Terwyn Tomas | Team Inspector |
| Thomas Petherick | Lay Inspector |
| Catherine Barnett | Peer Inspector |
| Terry Williams (Headteacher) | School Nominee |

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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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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 | R | Y1 | Y2 | 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:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Key stage 1 | 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 |