



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

**Coed Hirwaun Primary School
Cwrt-y-Carw
Coed Hirwaun
Margam
Port Talbot
SA13 2TS**

Date of inspection: 24 May 2011

by

Dorothy Morris

under contract to

**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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2011: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Context

Coed Hirwaun Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Margam, close to the border of Neath Port Talbot County Borough and the County of Bridgend. It is maintained by Neath Port Talbot local authority. It serves a wide geographical area, which is described by the school as being mainly socially and economically advantaged.

The school caters for pupils aged three to eleven years old and there are 179 pupils on roll. This figure has increased a little in recent years. Three per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals. This figure is consistently low and lower than local and national averages.

Currently, nine per cent of pupils are designated as having additional learning needs including three pupils who carry a statement of special educational needs. This percentage is significantly below both local and national averages. Nearly all pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language. There are a very few pupils from ethnic minorities.

The school has achieved many awards. It is an accredited Healthy School and has achieved Eco School status. It has met the standards to achieve Activmarc Cymru accreditation, the National Information and Communications Technology Mark and the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership and staffing structure of the school. The current senior leadership team includes three new members who were not in their posts at the last inspection. There have also been many changes amongst the teaching staff. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Coed Hirwaun Primary School is £3448 which compares with a maximum of £7911 and a minimum of £2843 for primary schools in Neath Port Talbot. The school has the 44th highest budget per pupil out of the 71 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The school's performance is good because:

- pupils make good progress in their learning;
- teaching is good overall;
- pupils are offered a range of learning experiences of good quality;
- pupils are very well behaved, courteous and have very good attitudes to learning;
and
- the school is a close and caring community with a welcoming ethos.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- school leaders have a clear vision for the further development of the school based on a secure understanding of its needs;
- the staff work effectively as a team;
- there are effective processes to monitor provision;
- school improvement and raising standards are the focus of strategic planning;
and
- recent initiatives have led to measurable improvements.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the school needs to

- R1 build on the improvements in pupils' attainments in the core subjects at the end of both key stages;
- R2 extend the good practice in teaching and learning more consistently across the school;
- R3 develop assessment for learning strategies further; and
- R4 strengthen further the link between self-evaluation and school development planning, and extend the role of governors in the monitoring process.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Children's attainment on entry is good overall. School data shows that pupils make good progress overall during their time in school.

Over the last four years, pupils' performance in English and science as measured by teacher assessments at the end of key stage 1 has been above or on a par with national and local authority averages in most years. Pupils' performance in mathematics fluctuates but was above comparators in 2010. Nevertheless, the overall results demonstrate a general downward turn. When compared with the family of schools' averages, pupils' performance again fluctuates and outcomes in English and mathematics have been lower in most years. When compared to similar schools nationally, based on entitlement to free school meals, the overall results place the school in the lower 50% in most years.

At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in English and science has been above national and local authority averages in most years, but fluctuates in mathematics. Pupils' performance was above the family of school's averages in 2010 showing an upward trend. When compared to similar schools nationally, based on entitlement to free school meals, the overall results also demonstrate an upward turn from the lower to the upper 50%.

The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level (level 3) at the end of key stage 1 fluctuates from year to year. At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5) is improving with outcomes in 2010 in each subject above the averages for the local authority, national and family of schools.

There are no consistent differences in the performance of boys and girls in key stage 2 although there are variations. In key stage 1, girls' performance is better than boys, particularly in oracy and writing. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress overall relative to their ability. According to teacher assessments, the attainment of more able pupils is more uneven. Pupils entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with their ability.

A scrutiny of pupils' current work shows that most pupils achieve well relative to their age and stage of development. This is reflected in the most recent teachers' assessments of pupils' standards of attainment in 2011. Recent strategies have had a positive impact on standards with an improvement in the overall outcomes at the end of key stage 1 including the performance of more able pupils in English and mathematics. In key stage 2, outcomes are good across the core subjects with all pupils in the cohort achieving at least the expected level 4. More able pupils maintain the recent trend in improved outcomes at the higher level 5.

Nearly all pupils listen well and speak confidently in different situations. The majority use a good range of vocabulary when discussing their work. Most pupils read competently and are confident in discussing the content of what they read. They write independently for different purposes and in different styles. As they move through the school, they write with increasing fluency and accuracy. Nearly all pupils apply their communication skills appropriately across the subjects. They use their thinking, numeracy and information and communications technology skills effectively to support their work in different contexts.

Standards in Welsh are good overall. Across the school, most pupils understand and respond accurately to a range of simple questions and instructions during lessons, registration periods and collective worship. In Welsh lessons, most pupils use basic patterns and a range of vocabulary with good accuracy. In best practice, pupils in lower key stage 2 achieve very good standards in their speaking skills. As they move through the school, pupils increasingly apply their developing reading and writing skills in different contexts.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils show pride in their school and community. In discussions, they confirm that they feel valued and secure in a caring environment. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living and eating.

Pupil behaviour is very good in the classroom and around the school environment. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. Most pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. They work productively with others and their independent learning skills are developing appropriately.

Members of the school council and eco committees are actively involved in making decisions and represent the views of pupils well and with enthusiasm. They contribute effectively to several aspects of school life.

Through curricular and general school activities, including extra-curricular provision, pupils acquire a good range of social and life skills which prepares them well for life outside school. Attendance levels are good and compare well with similar schools. Pupils arrive on time for school.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
---	-------------

Learning experiences: Good

Teachers plan a comprehensive and engaging programme of learning activities which meet the needs of pupils well. There is effective whole school planning to develop a skills-based curriculum. Planning to promote the progressive development of pupils' thinking, communication, numeracy and information and communications technology skills is less consistent. In best practice, there is effective use of a range of strategies to meet the full range of abilities within the class. This approach is not consistent across the classes.

The school makes good provision within and beyond the curriculum to enable pupils to gain an understanding of their place and responsibilities in the world. The well-established school council, the eco committee and the links with Bangladesh contribute positively to the provision.

There is good provision overall to develop the Welsh language. Most teachers use incidental Welsh appropriately during lessons and encourage pupils to respond. Nevertheless, the use of displays and opportunities for pupils to use Welsh outside lessons is less evident. Provision to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural, historical and geographical characteristics of Wales is developing well through the curriculum and the general life and work of the school.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers employ a good range of teaching strategies and suitable resources to develop the learning. In the Year 3/4 class, there are excellent features in the way the teaching promotes pupils' skills with a high level of challenge and support. In the very few lessons where teaching is less effective, instructions are insufficiently clear and opportunities to extend the learning are missed. Learning support staff assist pupils' learning effectively. Across the school, there are very good working relationships between pupils and staff within a positive learning environment.

The school has comprehensive arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The information acquired is used appropriately in planning the content of lessons and the approaches to teaching. The school has recently introduced monitoring software to track the performance of pupils although it is too early to assess its effectiveness in raising standards further.

Oral feedback to pupils on the quality of their work is always positive and encouraging. Marking, where it is most effective, is formative and clearly indicates a way forward enabling pupils to make good progress. Many teachers have embedded a few assessment for learning strategies in their classroom practice. Where they are used consistently, pupils work confidently and independently and begin to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and achievements. Annual reports to parents are informative and in the best examples include clear information about each individual child's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and supportive community. Learning experiences of good quality promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. As a result, nearly all pupils show respect for others. The school promotes a wide range of initiatives which encourage healthy eating and regular physical exercise. It collaborates closely with relevant agencies to provide additional assistance or support for pupils when required.

The school has an appropriate policy and clear procedures for safeguarding. All staff have received training and are aware of their responsibilities.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Thorough assessments enable the early identification of need. These pupils are well supported and individual educational plans are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that learning needs are met. Most pupils, and particularly those undertaking specific reading programmes, make good progress. Teachers inform parents fully about the progress their children are making.

Learning environment: Good

The school's ethos reflects its inclusive nature where pupils have equal opportunity to access all areas of the curriculum and activities. This develops pupils' social skills and challenges stereotypes appropriately.

The curriculum actively promotes cultural diversity and respect for others. There is a successful focus on developing the values of care, empathy and fair play through personal and social education, cross-curricular work, the links with Bangladesh and collective worship. The school also makes good use of local facilities. This roots the school well in its local environment and promotes pupils' pride in their locality.

The main accommodation, outdoor learning areas and grounds are of a high standard and are very well maintained. The building provides a stimulating learning environment that caters well for all pupils and is appropriately equipped to deliver the curriculum. Staff and pupils make effective use of the facilities. Pupils in the Foundation Phase benefit from indoor and outdoor learning areas that contribute well to their learning. However, space within the demountable classroom is limited.

The school is developing its grounds effectively as a learning resource. Recent improvements to the perimeter fencing and entry and exit procedures for pupils, staff and visitors improve the safety of all.

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

Leadership: Good

The new headteacher works closely with senior managers to create a positive whole school ethos. She communicates her vision effectively and is establishing a clear direction for the school. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher who, as acting headteacher, contributed significantly to school improvement measures. School improvement and raising standards remain the focus of strategic planning, and performance management has been used to good effect to support this objective. Job descriptions set out the roles and responsibilities of all staff which develops a better shared understanding of targets for improvement. All staff work well as a team. The successful use of classroom observations and increasingly the sharing of good practice have improved the quality of teaching and monitoring of standards. This is impacting well on pupil outcomes.

The governing body, which includes many new members, is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. It is developing a good understanding of school performance by reviewing data on pupil attainment. Overall, members' roles as supportive yet critical friends who visit the school for monitoring purposes are less well-established.

The school gives suitable attention to local and national priorities. Staff have worked effectively to improve pupils' literacy and information and communications technology skills, and to develop a skills-based curriculum at key stage 2. All these initiatives are having a positive impact on standards.

Improving quality: Good

A culture of self-evaluation is well-established and the school makes effective use of a range of sources to support the process. The views of pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors are carefully considered. Overall, the outcomes of the self-evaluation process influence the priorities in the school development plan, which clearly outlines the programme for improvement. Nevertheless, the focus on improving standards in specific subject areas and in identifying longer term developmental priorities is not always sufficiently clear.

Initiatives resulting from self-evaluation have impacted well in many areas of school improvement including improving standards in literacy and mathematics. Overall, the school has made good progress in implementing the recommendations of the previous inspection. The provision for music and the standards achieved are now good.

All staff are given good opportunities for professional development in line with their specified responsibilities and this is linked appropriately to performance management.

Teachers are involved in networks of professional practice within the school and with other schools. This contributes well to developing classroom practice. The work of a professional learning community within the school with a focus on reading and phonic awareness contributes effectively to improving standards in literacy. On a broader level, there is close collaboration with the local cluster of schools on a number of joint projects, in particular the transition activities with the local secondary school. This impacts well on the school's own provision. Under the leadership of the headteacher, good links are being established with its national family of schools.

Partnership working: Good

The school has fostered a range of useful partnerships which support pupils' learning and wellbeing effectively. It has a strong parent teacher and friends association that is very supportive and is particularly successful in raising money for community events and school resources. Staff work productively with different partners to support community links and projects. The school website contains hyperlinks to community groups' websites which promotes collaborative working. The school continues to develop as a focus for the community.

The school's partnership with its cluster of schools provides an effective and supportive professional forum. Shared professional development opportunities support the introduction of new initiatives that impact positively on teaching and learning. Transition plans agreed with the local secondary schools enable older pupils to be prepared appropriately for the next stage in their education and help to develop continuity in learning and wellbeing. Visits into the community and visitors from the community make a positive contribution to enriching pupils' learning experiences.

Resource management: Good

The management of resources is good. There are sufficient teaching staff with relevant experience and subject expertise to deliver the curriculum and related activities. Support staff are deployed well and work effectively alongside the teachers in the classroom. The school meets the requirements for workforce remodelling, and teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is used constructively to provide expertise in curricular areas. A good range of learning resources across the school is used effectively overall to support the learning in all areas of the curriculum.

The school budget is administered carefully and spending plans are clearly linked to school priorities. The headteacher and governors review these priorities regularly. Taking into consideration the good progress made by pupils and the quality of the educational experiences provided, the school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

About a third of parents/carers completed the questionnaire and responded positively to all the questions. Many state that their children are happy in school, feel safe and make good progress. Most state that their children settle in well and are encouraged to be healthy. They believe that pupils are respected and treated fairly. They add that the teaching is good and that the school is well run. The majority believe that pupils behave well and that the homework provided builds on what their children learn in school. Many add that they are kept well-informed about their children's achievements. The majority find staff approachable if they have any questions or concerns.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Almost all key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire and members of the inspection team spoke to pupils during the inspection. Most pupils believe that they do well in school and that the teachers and other adults help them to learn. All the pupils are of the view that there are enough resources to enable them to learn effectively. Most agree that they learn how to be healthy and that they get regular exercise. Many state that they feel safe in school and that other pupils behave well.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Nigel Hughes	Team Inspector
Veronica Williams	Lay Inspector
Anthony Stevenson	Peer Inspector
Owain Hyett	School Nominee

Contractor:
Pembrokeshire LA
County Hall
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 1TP

Copies of the report

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

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

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