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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Pen Pych Community Primary School
Blaenrhondda Road
Ty Newydd
Treherbert
CF42 5SD

Date of inspection: April 2011

by

Mr Mervyn Lloyd Jones

Under Contract for

**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

Pen Pych Community Primary school is located between the communities of Blaenrhondda, Blaen-y-cwm and Tynewydd which are at the head of the Rhondda Fawr. It is maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) local authority (LA). It provides education for pupils between three and eleven years of age. There are 21 pupils in the nursery who attend on a full time basis, and 107 in the main school.

Thirty nine pupils (30%) are identified as having additional learning needs; this is above the LA and national averages. The school indicates that most pupils enter the school with well below average abilities and with limited speaking and listening skills.

The school indicates that the area has poor employment and health statistics. Over 95% of pupils come from one of the most deprived areas in Wales. About 47% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM); this is well above the LA and national averages with the school being in the fifth benchmarking group for FSM. Attendance at 90% is below both the LA and national averages. Nearly all the pupils are from Welsh backgrounds and no pupil speaks Welsh as a first language.

The school was last inspected in 2005.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Pen Pych Community Primary School is £3728, which compares with a maximum of £9064 and a minimum of £2553 for primary schools in RCT. The school has the 37th highest budget per pupil out of the 116 primary schools in RCT.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of Pen Pych school is adequate. This is because:

- pupils wellbeing is good, they like coming to school and taking part in the learning activities on offer;
- the school is an inclusive community, where relationships are positive, pupils are valued and partnerships with the community are good;
- staff care about the pupils they work with and ensure that they are safe and secure in school; and
- the learning environment is attractive and helps pupils and parents to feel welcome.

However, there are areas of improvement which the school needs to address:

- the school's performance in National Curriculum assessments is below that of similar schools;
- a significant minority of pupils, particularly boys do not achieve well enough;
- there are shortcomings in some key skills; and
- learning experiences do not always meet the needs of all pupils.

Prospects for improvement

The school has adequate prospects for improvement. This is because:

- the commitment of staff to the pupils in their care; and
- the effective partnerships to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

However:

- improvement planning is not sufficiently focused on pupil outcomes.

Recommendations

In order to improve further the school should:

R1 improve standards of attainment in the core subjects;

R2 raise standards of writing in English particularly of boys;

R3 improve pupils' bilingual skills;

R4 improve attendance;

R5 improve long term planning for skills development; and

R6 strengthen the process of self evaluation and school improvement planning so that targets are clearly focused on pupil outcomes.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Overall, the standards at the school are adequate. For the last three years the school's performance against the main indicators at both key stages is generally below the family, LA and national averages.

Statutory teacher assessments in 2010 indicate that 73.3% of pupils in key stage 1 achieved the core subject indicator (CSI) that is the expected level 2 in the three subjects of English, mathematics and science in comparison with the family average of 75.8% and the national percentage of 81.6%. In the same year in key stage 2, 66.7% of pupils attained the CSI at level 4 or above compared with the family average of 60.2% and the 78.2 % nationally.

When compared with schools, which have a similar number of pupils entitled to receive free school meals performance in 2010 at key stage 1 in English is in the upper 25%; in mathematics it is in the upper 50% but performance in science is in the lower 50% in Wales. At key stage 2 in 2010, performance in English and mathematics performance is in the lower 50%. In science performance is the bottom 25% in Wales.

The number of pupils attaining the higher levels in all three subjects in 2010 at both key stages is below family, LA and national averages except in English at key stage 1.

The difference between the performance of girls and boys at both key stages is greater than the 'family' (compared with schools with a similar number of pupils

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eligible for free school meals and those in similar circumstances), LA and national averages. This is most marked in English in both key stages.

In the past three years, when compared with schools which have a similar number of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, performance in key stage 2 in all subjects, except in English in 2008 is consistently in the lower 50%. The number of pupils attaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and science at both key stages, apart from English at key stage 1 in 2010 is also consistently below family, LA and national averages. The difference between the performance of free-school-meals (FSM) pupils and non FSM pupils is less than family and national averages. Overall the performance of girls is better than the boys. The difference generally is greater than the national average.

In key stage 1, oracy skills are consistently assessed as better than the family, LA and national averages and in 2010 were the highest in the family. Assessments in reading fluctuate but writing is consistently below family, LA and national averages and the lowest in the family in 2010. Performance in key stage 2 is more variable but writing, although showing improvement, is consistently below family, LA and national averages and was the lowest in family in 2010.

In the Foundation Phase, the majority of children make good progress in relation to their age and ability, settling quickly into school routines and becoming increasingly confident learners.

Overall at key stage 1 and key stage 2 the majority of pupils particularly girls make good progress. Progress by many boys is not as good. Many pupils recall their previous learning well and show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in many subjects. The more able pupils apply their knowledge well to new situations showing increasing confidence as they progress through the school.

Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) achieve well against personal targets and make good progress relative to their ability, interests and previous performance.

Overall, the majority of pupils make appropriate progress in the communication skills of speaking, listening and reading. The majority of pupils' develop good reading skills and by the end of key stage 2 many read fluently, with good expression and understanding. Generally, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed. Very often, poor handwriting and presentation of work mars the quality of what pupils are recording. A number of boys have difficulty in expressing themselves due to poor spelling, handwriting and expression. Few pupils write at length in subjects across the curriculum.

Numeracy is used appropriately in a number of subject areas to record findings, particularly in science. Many pupils have well developed Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills; older pupils use these skills effectively to enhance their work in a number of subjects.

Overall, pupils' Welsh language skills are developing well. The majority of pupils understand and respond well to a range of simple questions and instructions. Their ability to read and write in Welsh is progressing well with some of the more able pupils in year 6 having a good understanding of what they have read. Many pupils

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have yet to develop the skills and confidence to use Welsh informally in and around the school. Pupils' awareness of Welsh geography, history and culture is good.

Wellbeing: Good

The standards of wellbeing are good. All pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues. They understand the importance of regular exercise and the need to eat healthily. All pupils feel safe in school and say that little bullying or harassment occurs. The behaviour of nearly all pupils is good both within classes and at break and lunchtimes. Nearly all pupils are polite, courteous and show respect for each other. This is reflected in their positive and generally enthusiastic attitude to learning.

The School Council plays an active part in the school. Members feel that their suggestions are taken seriously and believe that they have a say in the life of the school. They are involved in community initiatives, this they do enthusiastically and with pride. Pupils are beginning to develop the skills necessary to understand how well they are doing but they are yet to develop their thinking as to what they need to do to move on to the next stage of learning.

Attendance at 90% is lower than reported in the previous inspection and is below the averages for similar schools. Most pupils arrive punctually for school.

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

The quality of learning experiences is adequate. The curriculum requirements in the Foundation Phase, key stage 1 and key stage 2 including religious education are appropriately met and many learning experiences are interesting and relevant to pupils' experiences within and beyond the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced but does not build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills consistently. Tasks are not always adapted to suit the needs of all learners and a few pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Provision is not always clear, consistent and coherent for progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT because it does not ensure continuity in pupils' learning. Welsh language provision is adequate. Pupils make steady progress within the classroom but the use of Welsh outside the classroom is not well developed. Provision for the Welsh dimension is good. The school successfully promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The majority of teaching ensures pupils are motivated and engaged and secures appropriate progress and learning. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use a good range of approaches and activities to inspire and challenge many children. Planned lessons have learning objectives that are carefully explained to pupils at the start. Good use is made of appropriate resources, including technology, to enhance learning. Effective use is made of classroom support assistants and they make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Feedback to pupils, both orally and through marking,

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enables them to develop satisfactory understanding of how well they are doing and in the best instances what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils' progress is tracked across the school but this information is not yet being used effectively to impact on standards. Parents/carers are kept well informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing and progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Care, support and guidance is good. Effective arrangements are in place to support pupils' wellbeing and healthy lifestyles as well as to encourage their involvement in their school or wider community. These arrangements contribute well to pupils' development and wellbeing and support their learning effectively. Learning experiences promote pupils' personal development well, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

The school's liaison arrangements with an extensive and comprehensive range of external agencies and support services are very effective. Induction arrangements for new pupils are good as is the support for pupils transferring to the local high school. The school's personal, health and social education programme contributes very positively to the health and wellbeing of pupils. Procedures for monitoring prompt follow up of unexplained absences and lateness but are not wholly effective.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The school makes good provision for pupils with additional learning needs. Effective procedures are in place to identify individual needs early and accurately. Clearly targeted support for individuals and for groups of vulnerable pupils has resulted in significant improvement in terms of behaviour, confidence and achievement.

Learning environment: Good

The quality of the learning environment is good. The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils to learn and play. The caring and inclusive ethos is a strength of the school. Parents, staff and pupils all comment very favourably on the strong sense of care, inclusion and belonging that exists in the school. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. This promotes effective equality of access and opportunity.

There is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. Resources are well matched to pupils' needs.

The accommodation is colourful, relevant and stimulating and it supports and enhances pupils' learning well. The building and grounds are well maintained.

Key question 3: How good are leadership and management? Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

Leadership at the school is adequate. The head teacher's commitment to promoting the wellbeing of pupils is very evident. This contributes positively to the supportive ethos where pupils feel valued and respected. There is a strong sense of common

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purpose where the wellbeing and happiness of the pupils is nurtured successfully. However, this has not impacted enough on pupils' attainment.

Staff roles and responsibilities are well defined. The deputy head teacher provides good support to his colleagues and distributed leadership roles are developing throughout the school. All members of staff work hard and are committed to their pupils but their efforts are not consistently and effectively directed towards meeting specific goals. Staff meetings are regular but they are not sharply focused on pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning.

The use of data to monitor performance is improving. However, leaders do not use data well enough to identify and plan for the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

The school pays good attention to Performance Management and members of staff are given every opportunity to acquire new skills.

School governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil many aspects of their role successfully. They are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about the performance of pupils and the initiatives the school is developing. Their role in monitoring the provision and in challenging the school as a critical friend is less well developed.

School initiatives to meet local and national priorities are developing well. There is good attention to pupils' wellbeing, the development of the Welsh language, implementing the Foundation Phase and curriculum arrangements in key stage 2.

Improving Quality: Adequate

The process of self-evaluation and development planning is adequate. Leaders are continuing to develop their skills and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Evidence is based on data analysis and a programme of subject reviews and classroom observations. These evaluations, however, tend to focus on provision and teaching rather than on pupil outcomes.

The self-evaluation report, in parts, tends to be descriptive rather than evaluative and lacks clear and concise judgements on outcomes. Although the school identifies some important areas for development the link between the self-evaluation report, priorities in the school improvement plan (SIP) and pupils' targets for improving their work is not always clear.

Priorities for improvement as identified in the SIP appear appropriate but the identified actions are not specific enough as to how they are likely to affect improvement.

Pupils and parents views are sought both formally and informally and their observations are considered seriously. The views of a wide range of partners and external agencies associated with the school also contribute positively to the process.

The school is pro-active within its professional learning community.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership working is good. The school has effective partnerships to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. These relationships play a significant role in supporting the school's work to make sure pupils are well cared for.

The school works closely and communicates effectively with parents. Most are very supportive of its work; they feel welcome and have good opportunities to be involved in the school. Those who take part in activities such as Family Learning and the Super Dads programme have a good understanding of the role they can play in their children's education.

There are very good partnerships with the crèche that operate on the school site. The positive interaction between school staff and crèche leaders facilitates children's smooth transition to school and contributes well to effective community links.

There are strong links between the school and the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Staff participate keenly in activities with the local authority cluster of schools. These activities contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing and aid the smooth transition of pupils. These links also help to moderate and quality assure assessment of pupils' work.

The school has strong community links. Members of the community make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of their locality.

Resource management: Adequate

Resource management is adequate. The school is well staffed and resourced to teach the curriculum effectively. Teachers and support staff are appropriately deployed. Effective use is made of planning, preparation and assessment time although arrangements to monitor its impact are underdeveloped. The accommodation including outdoor areas is used effectively to provide an attractive and safe environment for pupils' learning. Learning resources are accessible and used well.

The school manages its budget appropriately. Spending decisions are linked to priorities for action identified in the SIP, however, leaders and managers do not monitor outcomes closely enough.

The school gives adequate value for money in terms of pupil outcomes and in its use of funding.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirty six parent questionnaires were returned and most expressed the view that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the school. All agree their children like school, feel safe and settle in well. Most parents believe that their children are making good progress at the school and say that staff expect the children to work hard and to do their best. Many say that homework build well on what their child learns in school but a few disagree. Most say that children behave well in school and that all are treated fairly and with respect. All parents say that children receive appropriate support in relation to any particular individual needs. Many parents believe that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school. Most feel they are well-informed about their child's progress. Many say that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints but a few are unclear about the procedures. Nearly all parents who expressed an opinion believe the school is well or very well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Fifty six pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. All say they feel safe in the school, know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset and think that the school deals well with any bullying. They say that the teachers and other adults help them learn and make progress and that they know whom to ask if they find the work difficult. All pupils believe that they are doing well at school and that homework helps them understand and improve their work. They say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. Nearly all pupils think that other children behave well and that they can get their work done and that children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Mr Merfyn Lloyd Jones	Reporting Inspector
Mr Goronwy Morris	Team Inspector
Mrs Mary Dyas	Peer Inspector
Ms Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Mr Gareth Todd Jones	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