



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

**Bedwas Infant School
St Mary's Street
Bedwas
Caerphilly
CF83 8EE
United Kingdom**

Date of inspection: May 2014

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

Bedwas Infant School is in the former mining village of Bedwas near Caerphilly. There are 161 full-time pupils on roll between the ages of three and seven, including 46 children in the nursery who attend on a part-time basis. There are five classes, most of which contain pupils from more than one year group. Most pupils are from the local area.

The school reports that 17% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is slightly below the average for Wales. The school has identified 25% of pupils as having additional educational needs. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. All pupils are from white British backgrounds and all have English as their first language.

The school was last inspected in April 2008. The headteacher was appointed in 2003.

The individual school budget per pupil for Bedwas Infant School in 2013-2014 means that the budget is £3,213 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £5,118 and the minimum is £2,645. Bedwas Infant School is 31st 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 the school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress and attain at least the standard expected of them by the end of the Foundation Phase;
- standards of wellbeing are high;
- the curriculum is rich and stimulating;
- nearly all teaching is good;
- the school provides high levels of care and support for pupils;
- most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress; and
- the school makes excellent use of the learning environment.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvements are good because:

- the headteacher has a very clear vision for the future improvement of the school that she promotes strongly;
- there is a highly effective team ethos that involves all members of staff;
- the governing body carries out its function as a critical friend well;
- rigorous self-evaluation procedures provide leaders with an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvements;
- planning for improvement is effective; and
- the school benefits from a good range of partnerships.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise the attainment of boys in language, literacy and communication skills at the higher than expected level
- R2 Raise standards in Welsh
- R3 Refine systems so that pupils can be more effective in evaluating their own progress

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The majority of pupils enter the school with skill levels below those expected of pupils of a similar age. During their time at school, many make good progress in most areas of learning.

Most pupils develop good listening skills. They learn to listen carefully to their teachers and when working together in pairs and groups. They share their ideas and opinions well. Most pupils' speaking improves well as they move through the school.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in learning to read. Most enjoy reading aloud with their teachers. They acquire a good understanding of the relationships between letters and sounds and they use this well to read unfamiliar words. By Year 2, many read with good expression, responding well to punctuation. The majority of older pupils handle non-fiction books well, using contents pages and glossaries to help them find information.

All pupils know that they can write in different styles for different purposes. They develop a good handwriting style, with good letter formation and careful spacing. The presentation of most pupils' work by the end of the Foundation Phase is good. Many write well in a range of genres, including recounting their visit to St Fagan's and writing lists and recipes. The majority write at appropriate length, ensuring that their imaginative stories have a beginning, a middle and an ending. Overall, many pupils use their communication skills successfully in their topic work, such as when predicting and testing which materials are magnetic.

Most pupils progress well in mathematical development. The younger ones learn to count and match numbers up to 10, count on and back in small steps and begin to acquire mathematical language. Older pupils read and write numbers up to 1,000 accurately, show a good understanding of multiplication and draw simple pictograms and graphs. Most tell the time at the hour and half past on an analogue clock, and use the words clockwise and anticlockwise correctly when describing right angles. Many pupils apply mathematical skills appropriately when collecting and presenting information about their favourite foods.

Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress in relation to their starting points.

In nearly all classes, pupils make good progress in developing thinking and problem-solving skills, such as when they engage in role-play on pirate ships or fishing boats.

Most pupils have a positive attitude towards learning Welsh. Most respond appropriately to instructions and join in with singing songs and rhymes. They practise writing sentence patterns and learn new vocabulary, such as the names of

foods and colours. However, few pupils are able to engage in simple Welsh conversations.

In 2012 and 2013, pupils' attainment at the end of the Foundation Phase compares well with that in similar schools. At the expected outcome (outcome 5), attainment in literacy in both years places the school in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. In mathematical skills, attainment places the school in the upper 50% in 2012 and the top 25% in 2013. In personal and social development, pupils tend to be lower than the average for similar schools.

At the higher-than-expected outcome (outcome 6) in 2012, pupils' performance placed the school in the lower 50% for literacy and the higher 50% for mathematical development compared with similar schools. However, in 2013, pupils' performance has risen in literacy and places the school in the higher 50% for literacy, and it remains in the higher 50% for mathematical development.

Wellbeing: Good

Standards of pupil wellbeing are high. Many pupils benefit from the highly effective targeted support that teaching assistants provide during play sessions and in classes. The staff each take responsibility for an area and provide activities that support pupils' particular circumstances. These arrangements contribute significantly to improving pupils' confidence and social and life skills. Nearly all pupils behave well, showing respect and consideration for one another and for adults. They say that they feel safe in school and are confident that the school will deal well with the very rare incidences of bullying.

Most pupils know that a healthy diet and regular exercise are important. They eat fruit and drink water regularly, and most play energetically on the playground. A high proportion of pupils travel to school on foot or on their scooters.

Nearly all pupils enjoy their lessons and engage well with their work. Most older pupils know their targets and begin to make choices about how they work and what they learn. They play and work together harmoniously, taking turns and sharing without argument.

The school council and eco committee make valued contributions to the life of the school. For example, the eco committee helped to draw up a travel plan and school councillors give stickers to pupils to reward good behaviour. Playground pals in distinctive yellow tabards look out for any pupils who appear anxious. Many pupils develop self-confidence and have great satisfaction in serving the school community well.

Attendance levels have fluctuated in recent years, but show an improving trend and place the school in the higher 50% when compared with similar schools in 2013. Most pupils arrive punctually. Most pupils are getting to know their community well through their involvement with a number of churches and community groups. They are keen to describe how their charitable work has benefited an orphanage in India.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The school successfully provides a rich and stimulating range of interesting learning experiences for pupils within and outside the school. A good range of visitors to school engages the interest of pupils well. The curriculum builds systematically on pupils' existing skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. The school provides a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' learning experiences. Teachers organise classes and groups of pupils effectively to address the learning and emotional needs of all appropriately. Teachers plan collaboratively to ensure nearly all pupils make good progress over time.

Carefully structured frameworks ensure that pupils build systematically on the skills they have achieved. In particular, they develop literacy skills effectively across a suitably wide range of contexts. The school promotes the Welsh dimension successfully and uses the local environment imaginatively to develop a strong sense of community among pupils. However, arrangements for developing pupils' Welsh language skills are limited.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is very good. The school promotes these innovatively to ensure pupils gain a secure understanding of life and cultures in other countries. Close links with India, South Africa and New Zealand promote pupils' understanding of the wider world very well.

Teaching: Good

All teachers and teaching assistants have very good working relationships with pupils that support purposeful learning opportunities. In most lessons, teachers create imaginative scenarios that engage pupils' enthusiasm. For example, they pretend that actors have asked them to provide a novel ending for a traditional pantomime. Teachers organise their classrooms into well-defined, stimulating learning areas that provide a good range of experiences. Staff plan collaboratively to provide challenges that match most pupils' needs and abilities well. Most teachers have high expectations of all pupils and manage their behaviour well. In the very few lessons where teaching is less effective, there is insufficient challenge for pupils and they are passive for too long.

Teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and regularly. Teachers use an electronic tracking system effectively to identify quickly any pupils who are performing above or below the levels expected of them. All teachers provide pupils with useful oral feedback during lessons and mark their written work regularly. Teachers' comments praise good work and suggest ways in which pupils can improve. However, teachers do not always explain to pupils exactly what is expected of them in lessons. This limits pupils' ability to judge and assess their own progress.

Parents have regular opportunities to meet their children's teachers and they receive detailed reports on their pupils' progress at the end of the year.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The quality of care, support and guidance is a significant strength of the school. It contributes well to high standards of pupils' wellbeing. The school is a happy, supportive and caring community. Provision for moral, cultural, social and spiritual development provides pupils with a wide range of high quality opportunities for personal development. Arrangements for sharing concerns, praising success and mentoring contribute significantly to pupils' wellbeing.

The school identifies sensitively pupils with emotional and social difficulties. It has introduced imaginative and innovative arrangements to support them. For example, all teaching assistants act as playtime 'buddies' and provide targeted support in a wide range of contexts, increasing pupils' confidence and social skills. Their commitment to this practice contributes to outstanding levels of support and guidance for pupils.

The school has very strong links with a range of agencies. It identifies and responds swiftly and very effectively to any concerns regarding pupils' learning and wellbeing by seeking advice, support and information from relevant providers. The school makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

There are high quality intervention arrangements in place to support pupils who are not achieving their potential. Teachers write very effective individual education plans that enable the school to plan high quality support. Staff deliver a wide range of interventions successfully to meet pupils' additional learning needs well. Most make good progress.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school has an inclusive and caring ethos. Its focus on the development of pupils' self-respect and self-esteem comes through strongly in the life and work of the school. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to the opportunities the school provides.

Pupils learn to show care and consideration to others and the environment. All staff and pupils treat each other fairly in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The school has an appropriate policy for promoting equality and human rights.

The school has indoor areas that provides a welcoming and vibrant learning environment for pupils. There are attractive wall displays that celebrate pupils' work and achievements as well as supporting their learning. Staff organise classrooms and shared areas well. Enough resources of good quality meet the needs of all pupils appropriately. The school is very secure and well maintained.

Pupils have very good access to outdoor learning and play areas of high quality. The use they make of the outdoors for learning is a strong feature of the school and helps nearly all pupils to learn and to play very well. The outdoor grassed and hard-surface

areas are designated as activity areas for a very good range of stimulating activities. Those children who have educational or emotional needs are selected to be with adults who provide calmer, more reflective activities, such as gardening or simply chatting to someone they trust.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision and direction for the school. She leads a very effective team who support her very effectively. Staff work very closely together as a team, with staff at all levels willing to take responsibility for aspects of the school's life and work. They have shared goals that focus well on raising pupils' standards and wellbeing. Staff share responsibility for the development of the curriculum well. Regular staff and management meetings address areas for improvement identified in the school's development plan effectively.

The performance management system is thorough and there are appropriate arrangements to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in every class. Arrangements for teachers to observe each other are developing well.

The governing body supports the school conscientiously and individual governors undertake their roles effectively. They perform their role as a critical friend and routinely review data on pupil performance and the school's progress towards meeting targets. When appropriate, governors challenge the school to improve.

The school responds well to national and local priorities, for example through the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Mid-morning snacks are limited to fresh fruit and vegetables and the school sends regular reminders to parents about the importance of healthy foods in lunchboxes. The school has implemented the Foundation Phase effectively across all classes and teachers are beginning to address the Literacy and Numeracy Framework in their planning appropriately.

Improving quality: Good

The school has a well-established self-evaluation process. It is systematic and based firmly on first-hand evidence from a wide range of sources that includes rigorous classroom monitoring, regular scrutiny of pupils' work, listening to learners and annual questionnaires to parents. Leaders analyse a suitable range of assessment data rigorously to identify trends over time and the comparative attainment of different groups of pupils. The school takes account of the reviews of external bodies well. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's main strengths and opportunities for improvement. The self-evaluation report is detailed and suitably evaluative.

The outcomes of self-evaluation lead effectively to the inclusion of specific areas for improvement in the school's development plan. The plan comprises a manageable number of prioritised objectives. Relevant areas for attention have appropriate targets, success criteria, timescales and costs. The plan identifies clearly staff that have delegated responsibilities. The school is making good progress in addressing

targets in the development plan, such as implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and promoting high levels of attendance.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents and the community are strong. The school benefits from the support of the parent teacher association and their annual financial contributions have had a positive impact on the development of the outdoor environment in particular. The partnership with the local junior school is particularly strong and has a positive effect on pupils' transition to the next stage of their learning. The two schools share a number of beneficial features, such as the electronic system for tracking pupils' progress.

There are close links with the local cluster of schools. Schools work together to share training opportunities and staff have produced portfolios of work that help them to moderate pupils' work and to ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments.

Regular visits to the community and visitors from the local area make positive contributions to enriching pupils' learning experiences. The school promotes pupils' understanding of other cultures very well through the curriculum and through links with local churches. The school supports a number of charities in different ways and this serves to raise pupils' awareness of other people's needs.

Resource management: Good

The school has enough staff with appropriate experience and expertise to carry out their roles and responsibilities well. Continuous professional development ensures that teachers have good up-to-date-subject knowledge. The school is an effective professional learning community and staff have co-operated successfully with other schools in developing approaches to numerical reasoning within the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Support staff work very effectively alongside teachers to improve pupils' achievements in the classroom and when undertaking other duties throughout the day. The school makes good use of its accommodation and resources to support pupils' learning. The outdoor areas provide very strong support for the academic and social development of pupils.

The school manages its budget with care and its surplus is in line with that permitted by the local authority. Leaders and managers link school spending decisions with priorities for improvement appropriately. The school challenges itself to improve through focused leadership, good provision and well-planned use of resources. As a result, nearly all pupils achieve good standards.

The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2013, around 98% of pupils attained the expected outcome 5 in all areas of learning and the Foundation Phase indicator. This figure is significantly higher than the averages for the family of schools and Wales as a whole. When compared with similar schools, attainment places the school in the top 25% for literacy and the Foundation Phase indicator, in the higher 50% for mathematical development and in the lower 50% for personal and social skills.

At the higher-than-expected outcome, teacher assessments in 2013 place the school in the higher 50% for all three areas of learning, when compared with similar schools. This is an improvement on 2012, when pupil outcomes placed the school in the lower 50% for literacy and personal and social development. In 2013, pupils performance was broadly in line with the family average in literacy, but significantly better in mathematical development and personal and social development.

At the expected outcome, the performance of boys is slightly better than that of girls in all areas of learning. At the higher-than-expected outcome, however, girls performed significantly better than boys in literacy and personal and social development and slightly better in mathematical development.

In 2012, pupils who were eligible for free school meals performed less well than their peers in all areas of learning. However, in 2013 the reverse was the case with all pupils eligible for free school meals attaining the expected outcome. In literacy and mathematical development at the higher-than-expected outcome, pupils that are eligible for free school meals attained more highly than their peers, although in personal and social development at the higher outcome, they fared significantly less well than other pupils.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Primary Questionnaire (Overall)

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the school.	67	45 67%	21 31%	1 1%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r ysgol yn gyffredinol.
		63%	33%	3%	1%		
My child likes this school.	68	57 84%	11 16%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn hoffi'r ysgol hon.
		73%	26%	1%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school.	66	51 77%	15 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn yr ysgol.
		72%	26%	1%	0%		
My child is making good progress at school.	65	48 74%	17 26%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn yr ysgol.
		62%	35%	3%	1%		
Pupils behave well in school.	67	36 54%	27 40%	2 3%	0 0%	2	Mae disgyblion yn ymddwyn yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		47%	48%	4%	1%		
Teaching is good.	66	49 74%	17 26%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		62%	36%	2%	0%		
Staff expect my child to work hard and do his or her best.	68	48 71%	18 26%	2 3%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn disgwyl i fy mhentyn weithio'n galed ac i wneud ei orau.
		64%	34%	1%	0%		
The homework that is given builds well on what my child learns in school.	65	42 65%	17 26%	3 5%	0 0%	3	Mae'r gwaith cartref sy'n cael ei roi yn adeiladu'n dda ar yr hyn mae fy mhentyn yn ei ddysgu yn yr ysgol.
		50%	43%	6%	2%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	67	46 69%	18 27%	1 1%	0 0%	2	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		60%	35%	4%	1%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	67	47 70%	19 28%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		60%	37%	2%	0%		
My child is safe at school.	67	51 76%	16 24%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn yr ysgol.
		66%	32%	1%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs'.	62	42 68%	15 24%	3 5%	0 0%	2	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		56%	39%	4%	1%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	68	39 57%	26 38%	3 4%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		49%	41%	8%	2%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.	67	44 66%	21 31%	2 3%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n esmwyth ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r ysgol, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		62%	32%	4%	2%		
I understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.	67	37 55%	25 37%	4 6%	0 0%	1	Rwy'n deall trefn yr ysgol ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		48%	42%	8%	2%		
The school helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility.	67	42 63%	23 34%	1 1%	0 0%	1	Mae'r ysgol yn helpu fy mhlentyn i ddod yn fwy aeddfed ac i ysgwyddo cyfrifoldeb.
		58%	40%	2%	0%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to the next school or college or work.	62	34 55%	21 34%	4 6%	0 0%	3	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol nesaf neu goleg neu waith.
		52%	42%	5%	1%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	66	42 64%	21 32%	3 5%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		54%	39%	5%	1%		
The school is well run.	65	45 69%	20 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r ysgol yn cael ei rhedeg yn dda.
		62%	33%	3%	2%		

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Christopher Ian Dolby	Reporting Inspector
Mary Elspeth Dyas	Team Inspector
Andrea Louise Davies	Lay Inspector
Alison Jayne Williams	Peer Inspector
Lynne Hadid	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.