



A report on

**Greenhill Primary School
Penywrlod
Gelligaer
Hengoed
CF82 8EU**

Date of inspection: June 2013

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Greenhill Primary School is in the village of Gelligaer in the County Borough of Caerphilly. There are 141 pupils on roll between the ages of three and 11, including 16 full-time and 13 part-time nursery pupils who are admitted to the school at the start of the term after their third birthday. There are five mainstream classes and two special educational needs resource base classes. The two resource bases cater for 16 pupils aged four to 11 years who have social and communication needs. Most mainstream pupils come from the local community, an area of significant socio-economic disadvantage, which is a designated Community First area. Pupils in the resource base classes come from across the local authority.

Approximately 54% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is significantly above the local authority and all-Wales average. The school identifies that around 40% of pupils have additional learning needs. Seventeen of these pupils have statements of special educational needs. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. All pupils are of white British ethnicity and speak English as their first language. No pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes.

The school was last inspected in May 2007. The headteacher has been in post since 1997 and the deputy head was appointed in 2008. The new school building opened in May 2011.

The individual school budget per pupil for Greenhill Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £4,527 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Caerphilly is £4,640 and the minimum is £2,620. Greenhill Primary School is third 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 school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well by the end of their time at the school;
- nearly all pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning;
- relationships between adults and pupils are positive and this enables pupils to develop their self-confidence well;
- the quality of teaching is good overall;
- staff understand and provide for the specific needs of their pupils well; and
- the school building, grounds and facilities are excellent and provide pupils with a calm, rich learning environment that is particularly successful in supporting good behaviour and learning.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- leaders have clear aims for the school and have secured the support and commitment of staff and pupils;
- senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have identified what they need to do to improve;
- staff share responsibilities effectively; they are fully involved in self-evaluation activities and work conscientiously to implement planned developments; and
- the school has a good track record of improving pupil outcomes in identified areas, particularly attendance and literacy.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that long-term planning identifies appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and thinking skills progressively across the curriculum
- R2 Link the targets in the school improvement plan more clearly to shortcomings identified through self-evaluation
- R3 Enable governors to challenge the school more robustly in relation to the standards it achieves

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
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Standards: Good

The majority of pupils enter the nursery class with below average levels of basic skills. By the end of Year 6, most make significant progress and achieve good standards. They recall previous learning well and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills successfully to new challenges. The standard of work in many pupils' books is high and demonstrates good progress over time.

Most pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes and in the resource bases achieve well in relation to their starting points. There is no pattern of significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls, nor between pupils who receive free school meals and others. More able pupils often achieve particularly well.

Pupils' outcomes at the age of seven in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity are broadly in line with those of pupils in other, similar schools. The proportion of more able pupils attaining the higher outcome 6 in 2012 is particularly high.

Over the past five years, there is a trend of improving standards for 11-year-old pupils. Unverified data for 2013 shows that pupil outcomes have continued to improve. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in English, mathematics and science has risen considerably from just below 43% in 2008 to nearly 71% in 2012 and 83% in 2013. This is due to significant improvements in English. Outcomes for mathematics and science have remained steady. When considering the attainment of pupils in mainstream classes separately from those in the resource bases, outcomes are generally better.

Most pupils listen attentively. Many contribute effectively to class discussions and speak confidently to adults. Foundation Phase pupils develop a sound understanding of phonics and this enables them to read and write competently at an appropriate level. Key stage 2 pupils build well on this good start and most apply their writing skills confidently across the curriculum. Many older and more able pupils write accurately and extensively for a wide range of purposes. Standards of reading are mainly good. Most read accurately, using an appropriate range of approaches, including phonic strategies and context cues, to decode unfamiliar words. More able pupils read expressively and enjoy sharing their knowledge of a wide range of authors. Most pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are good. They apply these skills effectively to enhance work across a range of subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils use electronic tablets skilfully to present work, create films and assess their own work.

Most pupils make good progress in Welsh. Foundation Phase pupils ask and answer simple questions correctly. Key stage 2 pupils develop their reading and writing skills

well. More able pupils write extended pieces, using the present and past tense accurately.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils feel safe in the school. They understand the importance of eating healthy food and taking regular exercise. They believe that the new school building, grounds and facilities have contributed significantly to improvements in their behaviour and wellbeing. They are confident that staff will help them resolve any difficulties they may have.

There has been a significant and sustained improvement in attendance since the last inspection. Attendance rates for 2010-2011 placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools. Most pupils arrive in school punctually.

Behaviour is generally good. Pupils have a clear understanding of class rules and the sanctions imposed if they misbehave. During lessons, nearly all pupils are engaged and enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils contribute positively to school life through the work of the school council, the eco-committee and the sports council. Pupils' decision-making skills progress well, but they do not always develop these fully as teachers tend to take the lead in meetings. Pupils accept responsibilities maturely and carry out duties, such as organising playtime games, conscientiously.

Nearly all pupils show respect and care for each other well. They work together appropriately in a range of situations. Most pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the support and guidance they receive from staff. Many pupils in the resource bases develop appropriate social and life skills that enable them to participate more easily within their community.

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

The school provides a broad range of learning experiences that meet the needs of nearly all pupils successfully. Careful collaboration between Foundation Phase and key stage 2 staff ensures that pupils build systematically on their previous knowledge and understanding. The school's provision to challenge more able and talented pupils is effective. Staff in the resource bases adapt the curriculum skilfully to meet the specific needs of the pupils in their classes.

Teachers often identify appropriate opportunities in their short-term planning for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills in lessons. However, the school's long-term planning does not identify well enough how pupils develop and apply their skills progressively across the curriculum and between year groups. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including gymnastics and cookery, enhances the development of pupils' physical, creative and social skills effectively.

Provision to promote pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is good. The school's effective use of its innovative energy conservation features enhances the curriculum and the work of the eco-committee. Established links with a school in Greece successfully develop older pupils' understanding of the wider world.

Provision for Welsh language and the Welsh dimension enables pupils to learn about the language, culture, history and geography of Wales well.

Teaching: Good

Most teaching motivates pupils well and secures good learning. All teachers share lesson objectives with pupils appropriately and pupils usually understand what they need to do to succeed. Positive class relationships ensure that pupils feel confident to ask questions and make mistakes. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance are high. Teachers' short-term planning is detailed and they challenge all pupils effectively by providing interesting activities that match their abilities accurately. For example, one teacher created carefully differentiated activities that enabled all pupils to access complex texts by a wide range of classical writers. In the very few less effective lessons, class organisation is not always appropriate, teachers do not focus closely enough on pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their thinking skills.

Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others are good. Teachers mark books regularly and provide helpful feedback and targets. These enable pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Senior leaders track and analyse pupil data meticulously using the school's comprehensive tracking system. This enables teachers to identify pupils' specific needs, plan appropriate work and set accurate targets. Annual reports provide parents and carers with clear information about their children's progress and areas for improvement. Pupils contribute effectively to their own reports and teachers offer appropriate opportunities for parents and carers to respond.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has appropriate policies, procedures and programmes in place that ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of pupils. Staff encourage pupils to eat healthily and increase their levels of fitness through physical activities and after-school clubs. Learning experiences promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Staff promote high moral and social values, which helps pupils to develop tolerance and take responsibility for their actions. The school works particularly hard to encourage good attendance and its robust approach has had a significant impact on raising levels of attendance.

Good links with specialist external agencies, such as the local authority's support team for pupils with autism and communication difficulties, help staff to develop their own skills and provide good guidance for families. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream and in the resource bases is good. All staff know their pupils well. They provide good support to pupils and monitor their progress closely through regular assessments. Individual education plans identify relevant targets and staff use them frequently to plan relevant activities. The additional learning needs co-ordinator has a clear overview of pupil progress. She gives staff good guidance and provides appropriate opportunities for parents and pupils to contribute to reviews.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school has a calm, purposeful atmosphere that encourages learning successfully. It is an inclusive community, where staff take very good account of pupils' needs to ensure that all can participate appropriately in school life. For example, teachers show particular sensitivity when deciding how and when to integrate pupils from the learning resource base into mainstream activities ensuring benefits for all. The school's ethos, aims and policies promote respect between all members of the school community. The strategic equality plan meets statutory requirements.

The modern, purpose-built accommodation is excellent. It is secure and very well maintained. Classrooms are large, light and airy and support teaching and learning very well. Specialist facilities, including a sensory room in the resource base, and the library and community room, match the needs of the school and its pupils extremely well. This enables teachers, support staff and visitors to carry out their work effectively and achieve positive results with pupils.

Interactive displays inform and celebrate learning and teachers use them particularly well to motivate pupils to take pride in their environment. Interesting and innovative features, such as image recognition technology and monitors that display the energy produced by the school's wind turbines and solar panels, make the school an exciting place for pupils to learn. The extensive outdoor learning environment and carefully selected equipment contribute significantly to the development of pupils' physical and social skills.

This inspiring indoor and outdoor provision has helped to improve pupils' behaviour, attendance and engagement in learning considerably over the past two years. The school's very good resources, particularly state-of-the-art ICT equipment, enrich the curriculum effectively.

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

The headteacher, deputy head and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school and they share this effectively with staff and governors. All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and they work together effectively to ensure that standards improve continually. Strategic plans have had a positive impact on pupil outcomes, particularly in reading and writing across the school. Senior leadership meetings are regular and these meetings focus appropriately on relevant strategic issues and actions. Leaders use their detailed analysis of data and close tracking of pupil

progress to challenge staff to ensure that all pupils make progress. Well-planned performance management procedures support staff's individual needs and school priorities.

Governors are generally supportive of the school. The headteacher keeps them well informed about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. A few have attended training and this has improved their understanding of their role. However, governors do not always challenge the school effectively enough in relation to the standards it achieves.

The school takes good account of national priorities in its development plan. Its preparations for the delivery of the new literacy and numeracy framework are appropriate and build well on current developments. Recent improvements in the provision for Welsh language development have successfully raised standards of reading and writing, particularly in key stage 2.

Improving quality: Good

Senior leaders have a thorough understanding of the needs of the school, its staff and pupils. Self-evaluation processes involve all staff, and the school offers appropriate opportunities for parents and pupils to contribute to the process. Governors review the report and contribute appropriately through amendments or additional comments. Leaders use a wide variety of reliable first-hand evidence, including pupil assessment data, scrutiny of pupils' work, monitoring of lessons and teachers' planning, effectively to evaluate standards and provision. They use this information well to identify priorities for improvement.

The school has a good track record of improving standards in specific areas. The school's current development plan identifies relevant areas for improvement and there are detailed plans in place to achieve these targets. However, the plan is too long and complicated. As a result, the links between the self-evaluation report and the development plan are not always clear enough.

Effective networks of professional practice exist with other schools and partners. A few have been involved in groups studying pupils' literacy and the underachievement of boys, whilst others have taken lead roles in local authority training events on innovative practice in ICT. Sharing good practice with others within the school and from other schools has contributed significantly to the improvement in standards in reading, writing and ICT.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a wide range of strategic partnerships that support improvement in pupils' standards and wellbeing effectively. Links with parents are appropriate and senior leaders often seek out new ways to engage parents in their children's learning. For example, analysis of data identified underachievement in a specific year group, so the school focused its family learning class on this group of pupils and their parents. The school's tracking system has identified improved engagement in learning and co-operation skills for these pupils.

Effective links with a wide range of external partners enhance the curriculum for all pupils. The school nurse and police liaison officer support the personal and social education programme well. Good links with local places of historical interest, particularly Llancaiaich Fawr, extend pupils' understanding of their locality and Welsh history. A strong partnership with a local special school benefits pupils in the resource bases and their families considerably. Its outreach service supports teachers' professional development well and the shared use of resources enables these pupils to have regular swimming sessions, which help develop their physical, social and communication skills well. Effective links with the local authority's school sports development team provide a range of interesting sporting experiences for pupils that contribute well towards improving their fitness and leadership skills.

Good co-operation and effective moderation procedures with cluster primary and secondary schools ensure smooth transition for pupils and effective continuity in learning and wellbeing. These links help the school to ensure that pupil assessments are accurate.

Resource management: Good

The school has an appropriate number of qualified teachers and support staff who work well together to ensure pupils make at least expected progress. Procedures for monitoring staff performance are robust. Regular and relevant professional development enables staff to acquire new knowledge and skills effectively and this has led to mainly good standards in teaching and learning.

Staff make creative use of the excellent accommodation, resources and outdoor provision. Over time, this contributes greatly towards the quality of pupils' experiences and outcomes. Arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time are appropriate.

The governing body is aware of the school's financial priorities ad regularly reviews the school's budget. They know that leaders make funding decisions linked to priorities identified in the development plan and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives.

In view of the good progress made by pupils and the overall standards, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Nursery baseline assessments indicate that the majority of pupils entering the school have below average levels of basic skills. However, by the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. In 2012, outcomes in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity were broadly in line or slightly below the family of schools average. The proportion of seven-year-olds achieving the expected levels in all three assessed areas of learning placed the school in the top 50% of schools with similar proportions of free school meals. At the end of the Foundation Phase, there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys at the expected outcome. However, significantly more girls than boys achieve the higher levels in all three assessed areas of learning. The proportion of more able pupils attaining the higher outcome 6 in all three assessed areas of learning in 2012 placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools.

Over the past five years, there has been a trend of improving standards for 11-year-old pupils. By 2012, performance in the core subject indicator had risen to just below the family, local authority and all-Wales averages. Recent, unverified data for 2013 shows that pupil outcomes have continued to improve. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in English, mathematics and science has risen considerably from just below 43% in 2008 to nearly 71% in 2012 and 83% in 2013. This is due to significant improvements in English, particularly in reading and writing. Despite this considerable and sustained improvement, outcomes for 11-year-olds have meant that the school has remained in the lower half of similar schools for English and science for the past five years. Outcomes for mathematics been more variable and have meant that the school has fluctuated between the first and fourth quarters over the same time. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher level 5 compares more favourably, particularly in mathematics. This indicator has often placed the school in the top half of other similar schools.

When considering the attainment of pupils in mainstream classes separately from those in the resource bases, outcomes are better. This means that the school is often placed in the upper half of schools with similar levels of free school meals. There are no significant differences between outcomes for girls and boys at the age of 11. However, for the last two years, pupils who receive free school meals have attained better outcomes than other pupils. This is in direct contrast to national trends. Most pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes and in the resource bases achieve well in relation to their starting points. Nearly all pupils achieved their personal targets and most reach appropriate standards that are in line with their ability.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Twenty-eight parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Responses are overwhelmingly positive and compare favourably with the views of parents and carers in other schools across Wales.

All are satisfied with the school and agree that their children:

- like school and were helped to settle in well when they first started;
- are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise;
- are making good progress; and
- are safe at school.

All also feel that:

- the school is well run;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect; and
- the school helps their children to become more mature and take on responsibility.

Nearly all parents or carers are comfortable to approach the school with questions, suggestions or problems and think that:

- children in the school behave well;
- homework builds well on what their children learn in school;
- they are kept well informed about their children's progress;
- they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints;
- the range of activities available to their children is good;
- their children receive appropriate additional support for their particular needs; and
- their children are prepared well for moving on to the next school.

Responses to pupil questionnaires

Seventy-nine pupils from key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Their views, particularly about behaviour, are more positive than the opinions of pupils in other schools in Wales.

All pupils say that:

- the school deals well with any bullying;
- the school teaches them how to be healthy;
- they have lots of chances for regular exercise;
- teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress;

- they know whom to ask if they find their work hard; and
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Nearly all pupils:

- feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- believe they are doing well at school;
- think that homework helps them to understand and improve their school work; and
- say that children behave well in class, at playtime and at lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Sarah Morgan	Reporting Inspector
Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
Phillip Bowker	Team Inspector
Rhiannon Boardman	Lay Inspector
Ian Bird	Peer Inspector
Gaynor Anstice	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language;
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language;
- mathematics; and
- science.

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.