



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

**Parc Lewis Primary School
Broadway
Pontypridd
CF37 1BE**

Date of inspection: April 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

Parc Lewis Primary School serves a wide area on the southern edge of Pontypridd.

There are 192 pupils on roll, including 34 of nursery age. Pupils can join the nursery the day after their third birthday. There are currently nine full-time teachers, including the headteacher. Around 20% of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. A few pupils are from Traveller families. A few are looked after by the local authority. Very few pupils speak Welsh as a first language.

The school describes the overall socio-economic background of the area as economically and socially disadvantaged. About 35% of the pupils come from a neighbouring Community First Area. A similar proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 34% have additional learning needs. These proportions are higher than the average for the local authority and Wales. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

In the Foundation Phase, there are two learning support classes to meet the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Teachers in these classes are employed directly by the local authority, but the pupils are registered on the roll of the school.

The school is currently undergoing a major remodelling and refurbishment programme in order to increase and to improve its accommodation.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2011. The school was last inspected in March 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for Parc Lewis Primary School in 2012-2013 is £4,378. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff is £6,197 and the minimum is £2,561. Parc Lewis Primary School is 15th out of the 113 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- the majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points;
- the standards of pupils' wellbeing are strong;
- staff are enthusiastic and create a positive learning environment;
- the inclusive and caring ethos of the school ensures that all pupils and staff are valued;
- the school provides a good range of interesting learning experiences; and
- the quality of teaching is good overall.

However,

- standards are low when compared with those of similar schools;
- learning activities do not always meet the needs and abilities of all pupils well enough; and
- pupils' writing skills across the curriculum in key stage 2 are weak

Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- the headteacher provides strong leadership and has instilled a sense of common purpose throughout the school;
- planning for improvement focuses clearly on raising standards;
- recent initiatives have raised standards in reading and improved the quality of teaching; and
- all members of staff contribute effectively towards developing and implementing school improvement plans.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' writing skills across the curriculum
- R2 Continue to improve pupils' Welsh language skills, particularly in key stage 2
- R3 Improve attendance rates
- R4 Ensure that key skills are planned consistently across the curriculum
- R5 Provide learning experiences that consistently challenge all pupils
- R6 Further develop the role of the governing body in providing more challenge to the school

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

On entry to the school, many pupils have language, personal and social skills below the level normally expected of pupils of a similar age. Few pupils arrive with the expected level of skills in early reading and writing. Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting-points as they move through the school.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils speak readily in class and most can communicate their ideas and opinions well. They are keen to ask questions. They have good listening skills and listen well to each other in whole-class sessions and in pairs and group work.

More able pupils read fluently and with expression and find information confidently in books. They show a good understanding of a story in books. Pupils of average and below average ability are beginning to have a firmer grasp of phonics and are developing a range of appropriate strategies to work out unfamiliar words.

Most pupils make suitable progress in their writing skills. Many older pupils in the Foundation Phase choose words for variety and interest and spell simple words correctly. They use simple punctuation and sentence structure appropriately.

At key stage 2, the majority of pupils' skills in reading and listening develop well. Many pupils contribute sensibly in lessons. By the end of the key stage, most pupils read with confidence and use their skills competently when researching for information in books or by using the computer. Generally, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed. Occasionally, poor handwriting and presentation of work mar the quality of pupils' work. Few pupils write at length in subjects across the curriculum.

All pupils do not make enough progress in the development of their Welsh language skills. The majority achieve well in structured Welsh lessons, but their ability to use Welsh outside the classroom is limited. Pupils' reading and writing skills do not develop systematically and consistently enough as they move through key stage 2, although the majority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 begin to show a better understanding and grasp of Welsh grammar and respond appropriately to different ways of writing. Standards of attainment the end of both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 are affected adversely by the inclusion of pupils from the learning support classes in the performance data and the large proportion of pupils who join and leave the school during the academic year.

In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, around half of the children achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5 or better) in the Foundation Phase indicator, in language, literacy and communication skills and in mathematical development. The majority achieved the expected outcome in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. Results were significantly below the averages for other schools in the family and in Wales. The percentage of more able pupils who attained the higher outcome (outcome 6) is also significantly below the averages for other schools in the family and in Wales in all learning areas.

In comparison with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's performance at the expected outcome or better placed it in the bottom 25% in all learning areas.

In key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4 or better) in English, mathematics and science in combination compared well with the family of similar schools average, but it was below the national average.

Results over the past four years have generally been lower than the family and Wales averages at both the expected and higher levels.

In 2012, in comparison with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's performance at the expected level placed it in the top 50% for the core subject indicator, mathematics and science, but in the lower 50% for English.

Over the past four years, the school's performance has fluctuated. In 2009 and 2010 performance placed it in the bottom 25% of schools with similar proportions of free-school-meal pupils in all areas. However, outcomes improved in 2011 and 2012, particularly in mathematics and science with the school placed in the top 50%. However, outcomes in English in both years placed the school in the lower 50%.

In 2012, girls performed better than boys in all areas of learning in the Foundation phases. In key stage 2, the performance of boys and girls was similar in English, but boys performed significantly better in mathematics and science.

Pupils with additional learning needs generally make good progress in relation to their age and ability.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils are aware of the importance of eating healthily, keeping fit and taking part in regular exercise. Nearly all pupils feel safe, are happy and secure in school and know whom they can talk to if they are worried or upset.

Nearly all pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Most pupils show courtesy and respect to each other, members of staff and visitors. When necessary, the school deals well with instances of poor behaviour. In lessons, most pupils collaborate well and are motivated to learn. They show interest in what they do and concentrate well.

Attendance rate of almost 91% is below the local authority and all-Wales average. This is largely affected by the large proportion of pupils who join and leave the school during each academic year which is a particular feature at the school. This has been the pattern for many years. This places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Most pupils arrive at school punctually.

The school council and eco-committee are well established and play an active part in the life of the school. Pupils feel that staff take their suggestions seriously and that

they have influenced decision-making. A good example of this is the positive way in which they have contributed to improving the school environment.

Many pupils benefit from taking part in activities involving the wider community, particularly in developing the school garden. Pupils determine which charities they wish to support, such as Children in Need, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Across the school, pupils are now beginning to have a say about what and how they learn. Many are becoming increasingly well informed about their personal improvement targets and what they need to do to improve their work.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced and teachers provide a good range of interesting and relevant learning experiences for pupils. There are effective arrangements in place that allow staff to plan together and they collaborate well to ensure that provision meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education.

Teachers' planning identifies appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT), but there are inconsistencies in some subjects when planning for these skills across the curriculum.

The school has correctly identified those pupils who are more able and talented, but its provision does not always fully meet the needs of these pupils in order to challenge them appropriately.

Provision for the Welsh language is effective in developing pupils' oral skills and most teachers use incidental Welsh well across the school. However, there are limited opportunities to develop pupils' reading and writing skills.

The school provides a wide range of trips and activities and welcomes many visitors who enable pupils to develop a sound understanding of the cultural and historical characteristics of Wales.

The school actively promotes environmental sustainability and pupils are supportive and knowledgeable about the school's efforts to act in this way. There is good provision for sustainable development and global citizenship across the curriculum.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is good in most of the lessons observed. Teachers use a suitable range of teaching strategies and resources to support and enhance learning effectively. They share learning objectives consistently with pupils and make good use of plenary sessions to review progress. They demonstrate good subject knowledge and provide appropriately structured support to groups of pupils to improve their work.

Teachers prepare lessons well and have established good working relationships with pupils. They manage pupils' behaviour well. Support staff are used well to support pupils' learning within classes.

However, on a few occasions where the teaching is less effective, teachers do not always provide suitable tasks for the range of abilities in a class and do not provide enough opportunities to enable pupils to write extensively across the curriculum.

All teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Their comments are generally positive, but do not always help pupils to understand how to improve their work. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and the work of others.

The school gathers a wide range of assessment data and has introduced successfully a whole-school tracking system. All members of staff are involved in the tracking process and the information on individual pupils gives teachers a clear picture of all pupils' strengths and areas for development.

Reports on pupils' progress meet statutory requirements and ensure that parents are well informed about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school develops pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness well in lessons and teachers plans a range of activities to support pupils' health and wellbeing carefully. A good range of extra-curricular activities are available for pupils to attend which promotes their physical wellbeing.

Effective procedures such as rewards and sanctions are having a positive impact on standards of behaviour throughout the school. Most pupils have a good understanding of rewards and sanctions.

Provision for personal and social education is a strong feature of the school and supports pupils' emotional wellbeing effectively. Acts of worship for the whole school and for individual classes encourage pupils to reflect and to consider questions about their own and others' beliefs. Courtesy and respect for others are prominent qualities within the school. Staff promote these values well.

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

The school has very effective arrangements for identifying and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs. Individual education plans are detailed and have clear targets that address the needs of pupils appropriately. Catch-up sessions are carefully organised so that pupils do not miss out on other important curriculum opportunities. The integration of pupils from the learning support classes into mainstream lessons is a very positive feature of the life and work of the school.

Staff work effectively with a number of outside agencies, including educational psychologists and behaviour support teams, to enhance the support and guidance the school provides for pupils.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a fully inclusive ethos. It provides a very caring and supportive environment for pupils and equal access to the curriculum. The school takes full account of the diversity of pupils' backgrounds.

The school encourages positive attitudes and behaviour and celebrates pupils' achievements well through the newly-developed behaviour management system. The system rewards pupils who have done well with house points and headteacher awards, and letters and texts of commendation that are sent home.

The learning environment is warm and welcoming and, although there are changes to the accommodation taking place, particularly for Foundation Phase pupils; staff and pupils are coping well to minimise any disruptions.

Staff use the outside areas for the Foundation Phase classes effectively. The school grounds are well maintained and are used for a wide range of activities that enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Levels of resourcing are good and well matched to pupils' needs. Attractive and extensive displays in classrooms and around the school are of good quality and celebrate pupils' work and achievements well.

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

The headteacher is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher and together they provide good leadership for the school. The school's mission statement, developed jointly by staff, pupils, governors and parents informs all strategic planning. As a result, all members of staff share a clear vision and sense of purpose.

The headteacher and the senior management team communicate the school's aims effectively to all staff. Many members of staff at all levels carry leadership roles and responsibilities and they contribute effectively to school improvement. There is a good level of team work throughout the school. Whole-school and phase meetings focus well on the standards pupils achieve and on improving the school's provision.

The school manages the performance of teachers and support staff effectively through a programme of regular monitoring activities. The outcomes of monitoring inform the setting of suitable whole-school and individual improvement targets. Individual and whole-school training needs are identified successfully.

The members of the governing body are very supportive of the school. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They visit the school regularly and receive appropriate information about the school's performance. However, their role as critical friends is limited and they do not challenge the school enough about its performance.

The school gives good attention to meeting national and local priorities. It has established the Foundation Phase successfully with appropriate resources. Teachers have begun to use assessment for learning approaches within lessons, and these contribute appropriately to raising standards. The more recent focus on improving literacy is having a positive effect on raising standards, particularly in reading.

Improving quality: Good

The headteacher has put in place effective systems to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. The school's self-evaluation processes are thorough and take good account of the views of pupils, parents, staff and governors. They draw effectively on a range of first-hand evidence, including lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work.

The school conducts a detailed analysis of data on pupils' progress and attainment. It uses this analysis well to identify whole-school areas for improvement and those pupils who could achieve more with additional support.

The self-evaluation report is an accurate reflection of the school's current position and is beginning to have a positive impact on standards, particularly in reading across the school.

There are direct links between the school self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan. The plan is comprehensive and detailed. All priorities include measurable and specific targets that link well to improving pupils' standards.

The successful teamwork between the teachers and support staff within the school and with colleagues in other schools enhances their professional knowledge and expertise and has a positive impact on improving standards. Joint training in new approaches to teaching literacy has been particularly successful.

Partnership working: Good

The school has established a good range of successful partnerships which contribute well towards improving pupils' standards and wellbeing. The partnerships with parents, the community and others are robust. Many parents help with a number of activities, such as the school's gardening and craft club. Parents are especially appreciative of the care and support for their children.

There are good arrangements for transferring pupils to the local high school and all pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. These include transition projects, an induction period and visits by staff and pupils. Transition arrangements between the local play group and the school are good.

The school undertakes a number of successful joint activities with local primary and secondary schools to standardise and moderate pupils' work. This ensures the consistency and accuracy of the school's assessments

Links with the local authority and external agencies make an effective contribution to the quality of the school's provision.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has an appropriate level of staff and uses their expertise effectively to enrich teaching and learning and to deliver the curriculum appropriately. Learning support assistants' involvement in the delivery of intervention programmes and in supporting pupils with social and emotional issues is effective and successful.

All teachers receive appropriate time for planning, preparation and assessment and sufficient opportunities are offered for all staff to attend suitable training courses. Performance management procedures are in place for all members of staff.

The school manages its accommodation well despite the current remodelling that is taking place. It ensures that there is sufficient supply of resources of good quality to support teaching and learning. The impact of resources on teaching and learning is kept under review and there is careful planning of future resource needs.

The headteacher and governing body manage and monitor the school's financial resources well and ensure that they are linked fully to the improvement plan.

Considering the standards pupils achieve and their progress overall, the school gives adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012, around half of the children achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5) or better in the Foundation Phase indicator, language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development. The majority achieved the expected outcome in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity. Results were significantly lower than the averages for other schools in the family and in Wales.

The percentage of more able pupils who attained the higher outcome (outcome 6) is also significantly below the averages for other schools in the family and in Wales in all areas.

In comparison with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's performance at the expected outcome or better placed it in the lower 25% in all areas.

In key stage 2 in 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 4) or better in English, mathematics and science in combination, compared well with the family of similar schools average, but was lower than the all-Wales average.

In the individual subjects, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science compared well with the family of similar schools but was slightly lower than the all-Wales average.

Results over the past four years have generally been lower than the averages for the family and Wales at both the expected and higher levels.

In 2012, in comparison with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's performance at the expected level 4 or better placed it in the top 50% of similar schools in terms of the core subject indicator, mathematics and science, but in the lower 50% of schools in English.

Over the past four years, the school's performance has fluctuated. In 2009 and 2010, performance placed it in the lower 25% of schools in all areas. However, improvement was made in 2011 and 2012, particularly in mathematics and science with the school placed in the top 50%. English results in both years, however, have placed it in the lower 50%.

In 2012, girls performed better than boys in all areas of learning in the Foundation phases. In key stage 2, the performance of boys and girls compared well in English, but the boys performed significantly better in mathematics and science.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to questionnaires for parents/carers

Thirty-two parents/carers completed questionnaires. The level of satisfaction overall is slightly above the average for primary schools across Wales.

All parents/carers state that they agree or strongly agree that their child likes school and is safe. They all say that they are satisfied with the school and that their child is making good progress and is well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their education. They all say that the school is well run, that teaching is good and that the school helps children to mature and to shoulder responsibilities.

Nearly all say that their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started and that pupils behave well. They say that staff expect their child to work hard and that they receive appropriate additional support in relation to any specific individual needs. Nearly all agree that the school encourages their child to be healthy and to take regular exercise. They also say that homework builds well on what children have learnt in school and that there is a good variety of activities, including trips and visits.

Nearly all say they feel comfortable about raising any issues. They feel that pupils are respected and treated fairly. Nearly all say that they receive regular information about their children's progress and that they understand the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Learner questionnaires were completed by 84 pupils in key stage 2.

All pupils say that the school teaches them about how to keep healthy.

Nearly all pupils say they feel safe at school and that they know to whom to turn if they are worried or upset. They agree that there are enough opportunities to take regular physical exercise. Nearly all believe that they are doing well at school and that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress. They say they know what to do and whom to ask if they find work hard.

Most pupils say that homework helps them to understand and improve their work at school.

The level of satisfaction for the above questions overall is above average compared with responses in other primary schools across Wales. However, the following responses are below the average for primary schools across Wales.

Most say that they have enough books, equipment, and computers to do their work. Many say that the school deals with bullying well. Only a minority say that other children do not behave well so that they can get on with their work and do not behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Merfyn Lloyd Jones	Reporting Inspector
Eleri Anwen Hurley	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Darren Casker	Peer Inspector
Alun Roberts	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.