



A report on

**Williamstown Primary School
Arthur Street
Williamstown
Tonypandy
RCT
CF40 1NZ**

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

Williamstown is a community primary school based in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The school has a catchment area which is socially and economically mixed. Pupils come from Williamstown and Penrhiwfer, but also from the wider areas of Penygraig, Tonypany and Trebanog. In 2010 a small local infant school amalgamated with Williamstown Primary. In September 2011 the school moved from its site in the town to a newly-built school on the site of the Penrhiwfer football field.

The school has 318 pupils aged three to eleven years. Classes are largely organised on the basis of age, but there are three classes which provide nurture support. The school has a large nursery for 46 children. It also has a unit for eight pupils with communication disorder that is open to pupils from across the local authority.

Thirty one per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is above the national and local authority averages. The school has identified 31 per cent of pupils as having additional learning needs. No pupils in the school have statements of special educational need.

Nearly all pupils come from English speaking homes. No pupil speaks Welsh as a first language at home. A very few pupils receive support for learning English as an additional language. A very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The school was last inspected in May 2007. The current headteacher took up post in September 2009.

The individual school budget per pupil for Williamstown Primary School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,348.00 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff is £6,197.00 and the minimum is £2,561.00. Williamstown Primary School is 67th out of 113 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff 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 performance is good because:

- pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level is very good;
- pupils attainment in science at the higher level at the end of key stage 2 is good;
- the performance of the most able pupils in mathematics is very good;
- the standard of Welsh across the school is good;
- many pupils with additional learning needs make very good progress;
- the quality of teaching is good or better; and
- pupils with complex and specialist needs are very well supported.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared and understood by all staff;
- the school's self-evaluation report is open, honest, accurate. It identifies initiatives that have had an impact on provision and pupils' learning as well as identifying areas for improvement.
- the governing body acts as a critical friend and provides appropriate challenge; and
- the school provided good value for money.

Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' skills in data handling and modelling using information and communication technology across both key stages

R2 Improve pupils' attendance

R3 Apply assessment for learning techniques consistently across the school.

R4 Ensure teachers' written comments record what pupils need to do to improve.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Standards in literacy are good. In the Foundation Phase, a minority of pupils start school with limited speaking skills. However, nearly all pupils make good progress and by the end of the phase pupils listen carefully to other pupils and their teachers and they follow instructions well. By the end of key stage 2, pupils express their ideas clearly and they confidently debate issues which pose moral dilemmas.

Most pupils across the school read well. Pupils who have difficulties in reading make good progress in a short time. Most pupils in the Foundation Phase have a good understanding of phonics and they use phonic strategies well to help them sound out new words. More able readers in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 read with good intonation and pay good attention to punctuation marks. Pupils in key stage 2 develop good skills in reading for gist. They have an interest in words and make connections between words with similar stems. They show a good understanding of the texts they read and they can explain and justify their opinions. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading fiction and non-fiction texts.

In the Foundation Phase, standards have risen and the quality of pupils' developing writing is very good. By the end of Year 2, pupils form their letters clearly, use appropriate spacing between words and write on the line. Most pupils write simple sentences which are grammatically correct and they punctuate sentences correctly. More able pupils understand and use a very good range of vocabulary.

Pupils' standards in speaking and writing in key stage 2 are improving. By the end of key stage, pupils write complex sentences which are grammatically correct. They use a greater range of punctuation to express different forms of meaning and speech very well. Handwriting is clear and fluent. Most pupils write extensively across the curriculum in a range of genres. More able pupils explain and justify their ideas clearly.

Nearly all pupils across the school pay very good attention to the presentation of their work. They learn how to draft and how improve the expression of their ideas to provide writing which is well focussed and of very good quality.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils' standards in numeracy are good. They use numeracy skills well in a range of activities across the curriculum. The standards of more able pupils in mathematics is very good. They solve multi-stage problems independently and they discuss mathematical ideas bilingually. This is an excellent feature.

Across the school pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are less well developed. Most pupils have appropriate word processing skills. However, although pupils work effectively on paper using different data handling

techniques, pupils' higher level skills in data handling and modelling using information and communication technology are limited.

Standards in Welsh as a second language are good. Speaking and reading skills are particularly good. Pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase read simple texts with confidence. At the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils use Welsh very effectively in lessons.

In 2012, at the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils' attainment at the expected level, in literacy, language and communication skills and in mathematical development was above the average for the family of schools. Pupils' attainment in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development was near to the average for the family of schools. More able pupils' attainment at the higher level, in literacy, language and communication skills and in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development was well below the average for the family of schools. However, more able pupils' attainment at the higher level in mathematical development was well above the average for the family of schools.

When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment at the expected level in literacy, language and communication and in mathematical development was in the top 25%, while pupils' attainment in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development was in the top 50%. When compared with similar schools at the higher level, pupils' attainment in the mathematical development was in the top 25%. However, pupils' attainment in literacy, language and communication and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development was in the lowest 25%.

In 2012, at the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment at the expected level, level 4, in English and science was well above the average for the family of schools. This has been a trend for the last three years. Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the expected level was above the family of schools. This has been a trend for the last five years. At the higher level, level 5, pupils' attainment in English was near to the average for the family of schools, while pupils' attainment in mathematics and science was well above the average for the family of schools. In all three subjects pupils' attainment has been above the average for the family of schools for at least three years.

When compared with similar schools, the pupils' attainment at the expected level in English has been in the top 25% over the past three years. Pupils' attainment in mathematics and science has been variable over the last five years, although attainment has been in the top 25% for the last two years. Trends in pupils' attainment over the last three years at the higher level have been variable. In 2012, pupils' attainment in mathematics and science was in the top 25%, while pupils' attainment in English was in the lowest 25%.

The school accepts additional pupils onto its register in the course of the school year and this has impacted on the school's results, particularly in literacy.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Nearly all pupils are very positive about school and they participate well in lessons and activities. They are proud of their work and speak confidently about their learning. Their behaviour is excellent and they have positive attitudes to keeping healthy and safe. They are polite, considerate and relate well to each other and adults in the school.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. Pupils know to whom to turn to if they experience bullying. Pupils across the school develop very good social skills and they enjoy being involved in developing their school community. The school council successfully presented their planning to the governing body for an activity trail and many pupils benefit from this newly installed activity. The eco-committee plays a key role in helping to develop the outdoor areas of the school. However, as yet, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles for such projects.

The school achieved its target of 93% in 2011–2012, which is just under the all Wales benchmark. However, when compared to similar schools over a period of five years, pupils' attendance at school is poor overall. Pupils' attendance in four out of the five years has been in the lowest 50%, only rising to the top 50% in 2010–2011. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually at school. Pupils develop good independent skills through activities, such self-registration.

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

The school plans the curriculum effectively to include innovative programmes which stimulate pupils' interest. The Foundation Phase provides a firm foundation for developing independent learners. The school enriches learning experiences through a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Long-term and medium-term curriculum planning is comprehensive. School planning emphasises well the promotion of skills in literacy, numeracy and thinking skills across the curriculum. However, planning for the development of ICT skills is not yet fully implemented and pupils lack opportunities to use higher order ICT skills across the curriculum.

The school carefully structures classes to provide very well focussed support for all learners. The structure includes three support classes for pupils with identified needs. There are good opportunities for pupils to work in groups relative to their individual abilities in subjects. This helps to ensure effective progress in achievement and wellbeing. The structure contributes significantly to all pupils' good standards of achievement. This is an excellent feature.

Teachers promote the Welsh language effectively through topic work. The school successfully promotes the Welsh dimension through very good opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales through educational visits to the Urdd centre at Llangrannog.

There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about education for sustainable development through visits to recycling plants and projects outdoors.

The school provides effective opportunities for pupils to gain a good understanding of the circumstances, customs and traditions of different countries. The use of electronic communication with a school Montreal provides very good opportunities for pupils to speak directly to young people in Canada and learn about their lives.

Teaching: Good

All teachers and learning support assistants act as good role models for pupils and working relationships between adults and pupils are outstanding. All staff have very high expectations of pupil achievement and behaviour.

Teachers plan interesting activities with clear learning objectives. They ensure that pupils take full part in lessons and that they develop their own success criteria for selected work. In all classes, teachers differentiate work effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. They use skilful questioning to encourage pupils to think critically about topics and to form and justify their own ideas and opinions.

All staff provide pupils with clear and frequent verbal feedback which helps them to understand how to improve their work. Although all teachers mark pupils' work regularly and carefully, written comments do not always record what pupils need to do to improve.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly. They use the school's tracking system very effectively to identify pupils' achievements and to plan for the next steps in their learning. Weekly review meetings focus clearly on pupils' progress result in adjustments to teaching and, if necessary, movement of pupils to groups which enable them to progress well.

Learning support assistants work well with teachers to assist in monitoring pupils' progress.

Teachers use a good range of assessment for learning strategies, but do not always apply these consistently in all classes.

Reports to parents meet statutory requirements. They are comprehensive and provide clear information on the progress pupils make.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a very happy, caring community where all pupils feel valued and supported. The promotion of health and wellbeing is effective due to a wide range of activities and the provision of detailed information to pupils and parents. The range of learning experiences and extra-curricular activities promote pupils' personal, moral and spiritual development very effectively.

There are appropriate policies and strategies to deal with issues such as bullying, health and safety and internet safety. Teachers and learning support assistants promote and celebrate good behaviour very effectively. The school has an appropriate focus on encouraging pupils to attend school regularly.

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

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is an excellent feature. All pupils receive appropriate support and the school monitors their progress very carefully. Effective partnerships with specialist services, such as the education psychologist, speech therapist and other external agencies contribute well to this. The school involves parents in regular reviews of pupils' individual education plans. Targeted support in nurture groups results in a significant improvement in attitudes, behaviour, confidence, achievement and relationships.

Learning environment: Good

The school provides a friendly, welcoming and inclusive environment for its pupils. There is a clear ethos known as the 'Williamstown Way'. All staff understand the philosophy underpinning the ethos and they work successfully to communicate this to pupils and parents. As a result, there is a caring, calm and nurturing atmosphere throughout the school. A strength of the school is that most pupils who have challenges in learning and who move to the school during the primary years settle in quickly and make significant progress in their learning.

Displays around the school are attractive and varied and support pupils' learning. There is a good supply of high quality resources to match pupils' learning needs. Full use is made of resources in the community to supplement and enrich the curriculum.

The new school's accommodation is of very good quality. Each class has a covered outdoor space immediately accessible from the classroom. Teachers make good use of this space to extend pupils' learning experiences. The grounds provide stimulating and attractive areas for learning, physical activity and play.

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

The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school. He has a clear vision for its strategic development and a clear philosophy about the most effective provision in which pupils can learn. He communicates the vision and the philosophy very effectively to staff, governors, parents and the community. The structure of the school supports the vision and philosophy very effectively to ensure that all pupils have the best opportunity to achieve their potential. This results in an overall coherence and consistency both in ethos and in the work of the school which impacts on raising pupils' standards of achievement. There are regular visits from staff from other schools to learn about the philosophy and methods used in the school.

The headteacher, senior leadership team, teachers and learning assistants have a clear understanding of their roles. There is an excellent team spirit and all staff work very effectively together with a clear focus on pupil attainment, school improvement targets and meeting local and national priorities, particularly in tackling social deprivation.

There are comprehensive structures, policies and plans in place which focus well on meeting the wide range of pupils' needs. The senior management team, teachers and learning support assistants meet regularly to discuss the work of the school. At weekly phase meetings, there is a very clear focus on analysing class data to track individual pupils' progress and to provide appropriate intervention, when necessary.

There is a very clear ethos of openness among the staff. Senior leaders work across the school to support and challenge all colleagues well. Middle leaders are responsible and accountable for whole school leadership in curriculum areas. They challenge and support each other in their roles with the result that they work very effectively as a team to all pupils' needs.

The governing body meets regularly and has appropriate sub-committees in place. Governors visit classes, observe activities and monitor school performance. This helps them to better understand the work of the school and to challenge school performance.

Senior leaders share performance management duties. They plan and carry out rigorous performance management annually. There are clear job descriptions in place. Teachers and learning support assistants reflect effectively on their own practice and they contribute effectively to school planning and improvement.

Improving quality: Good

The school leadership team takes responsibility for self-evaluation and analyses a broad range of evidence as part of a rigorous process. Teachers, governors, groups of pupils and parents contribute effectively and their views are valued and incorporated well into the self-evaluation report. The self-evaluation report identifies clearly actions, which have had a significant impact on improving pupils' standards of achievement in mathematics and science.

This self-evaluation report successfully identifies further areas for improvement. As a result, the school has developed an appropriate school improvement plan. The plan sets out clearly the actions and costs, as well as responsibilities and timescales in which to monitor and complete actions. All staff have a clear understanding of the priorities in the plan and their role in bringing about the desired outcomes.

Professional development for staff links well to the improvement plan. Sharing good practice between staff members is a strong feature of the school and training impacts positively on pupils' standards of achievement.

There are effective professional partnerships within and with the cluster of schools in the local area. This has led to improvements in curriculum planning in literacy.

Partnership working: Good

There are a good range of partnerships that have a positive effect on pupils' learning and wellbeing. They include partnerships with parents, the local authority education service, specialist support services and the wider community including local businesses, the police and the local authority groundwork division.

The partnership with parents is strong. Communication with parents is very good and they appreciate the ease with which they can approach the school. They are directly and effectively involved in their children's learning. Parents and carers receive a good range of information about the life and work of the school via the school website and the school newsletter.

Friends of the school contribute significantly to raising funds, organising and running social events for pupils, parents and teachers. Many of the group members are parents and grandparents and this helps to keep the school in the heart of the community.

The school works effectively with a three main local secondary schools to support pupils' successful transfer to Year 7. Links include effective curricular and pastoral activities.

There are good opportunities for teachers to work together across school sectors, particularly in the subjects of English, mathematics and science. A particularly effective partnership exists with the local colleges, which provide training for learning support assistants. Training in emotional literacy support has led to significant improvement in targeted pupils' achievement and wellbeing. The school is also involved in employment-based teacher training helping to widen participation in initial teacher training. This has led to additional opportunities for staff who mentor the trainee to reflect upon and improve their own practice.

Resource management: Good

The school has a good range of experienced, specialist teachers and learning support assistants who are deployed effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils.

All teachers and learning support assistants receive appropriate professional development linked to the school improvement plan priorities.

All teachers have appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. Learning support assistants have good opportunities to contribute to planning.

The effective management of resources and the resultant impact on pupils' standards of achievement means the school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2012 at the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils' attainment in literacy, language and communication skills and in mathematical development was above the average for the family of schools and well above the averages for the local authority and Wales. Pupils' attainment in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development were near to the average for the family of schools and Wales, but above the average for the local authority. More able pupils' attainment at the higher level, in literacy, language and communication skills and in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development was well below the average for the family of schools, the local authority and Wales. However, pupils' attainment at the higher level in mathematical development was well above the average for the family of schools, the local authority and Wales.

When compared with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' attainment at the expected level in literacy, language and communication and in mathematical development was in the top 25%, while pupils' attainment in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development was in the top 50%. When compared with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals at the higher level, pupils' attainment in the mathematical development was in the top 25%. However, pupils' attainment in literacy, language and communication and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural development was in the lowest 25%.

In 2012 at the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in the core subject indicator was well above the average for the family, the local authority and Wales. At the expected level, pupils' attainment in English and science was well above the average for the family of schools, the local authority and Wales. This has been a trend for the last three years. Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the expected level was well above the average for the family of schools and local authority and above the average for Wales. At the higher level, level 5, more able pupils' attainment in English was near to the average for the family of schools, but below the average for the local authority and well below the average for Wales. Pupils' attainment in mathematics was well above the average for the family of schools, above the local authority and near to the average for Wales. In science, pupils' attainment at the higher level was well above the average for the family and the local authority and above the average for Wales. In all three subjects pupils' attainment at the higher level has been above the average for the family of schools for at least three years.

When compared with schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils' attainment at the expected level in English has been in the top 25% over the past three years. Pupils' attainment in mathematics and science has been variable over the last five years, although attainment has been in the top 25% for the last two years. Trends in pupils' attainment over the last three years at the higher level have been variable. In 2012, pupils' attainment in mathematics and science was in the top 25%, while pupils' attainment in English was in the lowest 25%.

Overall, there is no significant difference in boys' and girls' attainment at the end of the Foundation Phase, except at the higher level in mathematics where boys performed far better than girls. There is no significant difference in boys' and girls' overall attainment at the end of key stage 2, except in higher level science where boys strongly perform better than girls.

Overall, pupils entitled to free school meals perform as well as pupils not entitled to free school meals. Many pupils with additional learning needs attain the expected levels.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent/carers questionnaire

Thirty-one parents/carers responded to the questionnaire. In nearly all cases, parents/carers responses were near to or just above the national comparators.

All parents/carers say that:

- their child likes school;
- their child was helped to settle into school well;
- teachers treat all children fairly and with respect;
- they feel their child is safe at school; and
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.

Nearly all parents/carers say that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their child is making good progress;
- the teaching is good;
- teachers expect their child to work hard and to do his/her best; and
- the school helps their child to mature and take on responsibility.

Most parents/carers say that:

- pupils behave well;
- homework builds well on what their child does in school;
- their child is given appropriate additional support with individual needs;
- the school prepares their child well for moving to secondary education;
- the school provides a good range of activities, including trips and visits; and
- the school is well run.

Many parents/carers say that:

- they are well informed about their child's progress;
- they are comfortable about approaching the school with a problem; and
- they know how they can make a complaint.

Responses to pupil questionnaires

One hundred and thirty-five pupils in key stage 2 replied to the questionnaires. In nearly all cases, pupils' responses were near to or just above the national comparators.

All pupils say that:

- teachers and other adults in school help them to learn and make progress.

Nearly all pupils say that:

- they feel safe in school;
- the school deals well with bullying;
- the school teaches them how to keep healthy;
- they have lots of chances to get regular exercise; and
- they know who to ask if they find work hard.

Most pupils say that:

- they are doing well at school;
- homework helps them to understand their work in school;
- there are enough books and equipment for them to do their work; and
- nearly all pupils behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

Many pupils say that:

- other children behave well.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Penny Lewis	Reporting Inspector
Lowri Evans	Team Inspector
David Davies	Team Inspector
Julie Price	Lay Inspector
Phillip Harray	Peer Inspector
Andrew Manley	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.