



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

**Brynconin Primary School
Llandysilio
Clunderwen
Pembrokeshire
SA66 7TF**

Date of inspection: October 2011

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

Brynconin School is located in the village of Llandysilio near Clunderwen, Pembrokeshire and serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area.

According to the school, the pupils come from a social background that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Approximately 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is considerably lower than the local and national averages. There are no pupils in local authority care.

The number of pupils has decreased since the previous inspection that was undertaken in November 2005. Currently, there are 78 pupils 3-11 years of age in the school and they are arranged in four mixed-age classes. Approximately 5% of pupils are from ethnic minority groups but there are no pupils that are learning English as an additional language. Almost 40% of the pupils speak Welsh at home.

The pupils encompass a full range of ability and their attainment varies when they begin school. Approximately 18% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is similar to the county and national averages. No pupil has a statement of additional learning needs.

In 2011-2012, the individual school budget for Brynconin Primary School is £3,461 per pupil. The maximum amount per pupil for primary schools in Pembrokeshire is £5,323 and the minimum is £3,000. Brynconin Primary School has the 37th highest budget per pupil of the 61 primary schools in the Pembrokeshire local authority.

Since April this year, there have been substantial changes in the staffing of the school and, as a result, it experienced a period of instability. The current headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- in general, the standards of literacy are good, with most pupils making strong progress throughout the school;
- pupils of all ages are making good progress in their learning;
- pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well;
- in general, the quality of the teaching is good; and
- the high quality of the learning experiences stimulate pupils to make good progress.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has identified the school's development needs and has already implemented the improvements;
- the self-evaluation arrangements that were established recently are likely to lead to further improvements;
- all members of staff work together closely as a team and are willing to try new initiatives; and
- the school has made good progress since the previous inspection.

Recommendations

In order to ensure further improvement, the school needs to:

- R1 raise the standards of writing in key stage 2;
- R2 improve the accuracy of pupils' oral expression in key stage 2;
- R3 establish more rigorous self-evaluation arrangements;
- R4 implement more effective assessment for learning strategies and improve the quality of the marking in key stage 2; and
- R5 implement the aim to establish professional learning communities.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations. The authority will monitor the progress of the school.

Main findings

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

On the whole, the literacy skills of most pupils are good. In the Foundation Phase, almost all pupils are making good progress in their ability to use language, literacy and communication skills in different formal and informal contexts. During collective sessions, they listen intently and express their ideas confidently and correctly. By Year 2, a good number read fluently and write with increasing accuracy.

Most pupils in key stage 2 listen carefully during lessons and contribute purposefully in group and class discussions. Although they are confident speakers, the oral language of the majority of pupils is inaccurate. Most of them are confident readers and, by the end of the key stage, they acquire knowledge in an orderly manner from different sources, such as books and websites. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are very skilful in using English information books to reinforce their work in Welsh.

Although every pupil in key stage 2 writes suitably for a number of purposes, shortcomings in expression and spelling detract from the quality and accuracy of the work of the majority of pupils.

Pupils of all ages make good progress in their learning. Almost all pupils recall what they have learnt previously effortlessly and acquire new knowledge and understanding and skills confidently. With the exception of writing, most pupils, including the more able and talented, are working to their full potential.

At the end of the last educational year, pupils' performance in both key stages was generally comparable to the national results. On the whole, during the past four years, pupils in key stage 1 have achieved at a lower level compared with local and national benchmarks and when compared with pupils in similar schools. During the same period, pupils in key stage 2, have generally achieved either as well as or better than those in similar schools, with performance in science surpassing that in other three subjects. A small proportion of pupils achieve at level 5 at the end of key stage 2.

In general, there is no pattern of underperformance by boys compared with girls in either key stage.

Wellbeing: Good

Almost every pupil feels safe in the school environment and free from any physical or verbal abuse. They have a strong understanding of how to be healthy and appreciate that healthy foods and regular physical exercise have a positive effect on their wellbeing and development.

In every class, pupils behave in a responsible manner and show respect to and care for each other. During lessons, most of them are industrious and enthusiastic; they work together harmoniously and continue diligently with their tasks for extended periods. Many of the pupils recall easily what they have learnt previously and face new challenges confidently.

A prominent feature in every class is the pupils' strong commitment to their school and to the staff. As they mature, most pupils enjoy and benefit from the variety of opportunities to undertake responsibilities, including the eco group and the school council.

The pupils enjoy coming to school. In general, the levels of attendance are good.

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

The broad range of learning experiences provided meets the requirements of the full range of pupils, employers and the community successfully. In the Foundation Phase, the interesting and stimulating experiences that are planned enable the children to make good progress towards meeting the necessary learning outcomes. The area outside the school building is used extensively by the Foundation Phase to provide rich learning experiences for children. Careful whole-school planning ensures that the curriculum in key stage 2 builds systematically on pupils' current knowledge and understanding and that there is continuity and progression in their learning. There is appropriate provision to challenge the more able and talented pupils.

The opportunities for pupils to develop key skills and, in particular, literacy skills are, in general, very well planned. The intervention programmes aimed at pupils with low literacy skills enable these pupils to acquire the necessary skills that are required to gain access to the wider curriculum.

The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is core to the school's programme of work and imaginative use is made of the local area and its people to provide stimulating learning experiences and activities. The curriculum, together with a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are provided, helps pupils to develop a number of key personal and social skills very effectively.

There is comprehensive provision to promote pupils' understanding and experiences of global citizenship. Respecting multi-cultures, promoting anti-racist attitudes and developing fairness and equal opportunities are strong elements of the school's culture. Recently, specific strategies have been implemented to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of sustainability and protecting the environment.

Teaching: Good

Teachers have a good, up-to-date subject knowledge and most of the time they have high expectations of their pupils. The practice of sharing learning aims at the beginning of lessons with pupils strengthens their commitment and interest. A wide

range of methods and resources is used thoughtfully in order to engender interest and stimulate learning. Throughout the school and, in particular, in the Foundation Phase, skilful use is made of open-ended questions to extend pupils' thinking skills and their knowledge and understanding.

In every class, there is a close relationship between adults and pupils and good behaviour is encouraged in an unobtrusive and positive manner.

Through the effective use of support staff, good support is provided for pupils with additional learning needs. However, at times, the tasks have not been adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of every individual.

Although a very wide range of resources is used purposefully by teachers, they rarely use information and communication technology equipment and programmes to enrich the learning and teaching.

In general, teachers' oral feedback enables pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The assessment in the Foundation Phase is good and the information that has been gathered is used effectively to feed into future planning. However, the quality of marking children's work in key stage 2 is inconsistent. At times, it is too superficial and does not provide sufficiently clear guidance for pupils on how to improve. The implementation of assessment for learning strategies is in its early stages of development.

Pupils' annual reports are clear and helpful and are appreciated by parents.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's quality of care for the pupils is very good. The staff ensure that there is a warm and welcoming atmosphere and that the needs of every individual are met. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe and that they achieve their emotional and physical wellbeing successfully. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and, through physical activities and after-school clubs, they have a broad range of opportunities to increase their levels of fitness and health.

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well co-ordinated and strongly embedded in the curriculum and in the school's daily activities. The school promotes high values, which help pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and encourage them to take responsibility for their actions.

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

The school promotes good attendance consistently and has acted very effectively in specific cases in order to ensure improvement.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and through regular assessments a close watch is kept on their progress by setting them suitable and attainable tasks. Pupils and parents have an active role in all the processes and good and beneficial links exist with specialist external agencies.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a happy and inclusive community, in which pupils have an equal opportunity to access all educational and social provision. A clear emphasis is placed on acknowledging, respecting and celebrating diversity and on creating an ethos that nurtures care and tolerance.

There is an extensive supply of high-quality resources that is matched appropriately to the whole range of ages and ability.

The building is of good quality and the school has used every space purposefully and for the benefit of pupils. The outside area for the Foundation Phase is a valuable and interesting resource that provides varied experiences for the children. It promotes their learning and personal and social development very effectively.

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

The skilled leadership of the headteacher and the governing body conveys a clear vision and gives a strategic direction to the work of the school. In a short period, the headteacher has succeeded in identifying the school's main strengths and the areas for development and has implemented improvements. The school has clear strategic aims and objectives, which are shared with members of staff, governors and parents.

The teaching staff and the support staff work together closely as a team and under the leadership of the headteacher; they have been prepared to try new initiatives and different methods of working. All members of staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities very conscientiously. By means of thorough performance management arrangements, staff training and development needs, as well as the needs of the school, are identified and rigorously met.

The governing body plays a prominent role in identifying priorities and planning improvements. Through self-evaluation, it has a good understanding of the way the school is performing and this is reinforced further through a number of visits and observations made jointly with members of staff. The governing body challenges the school as a critical friend and deals immediately with any concerns or complaints.

The school has recently incorporated a number of national and local priorities in its programme of work. However, developments such as assessment for learning and thinking skills are not currently sufficiently well embedded in the working methods of every class. The Foundation Phase is well established and makes a substantial contribution to raising standards and improving learning.

Improving quality: Adequate

The headteacher, staff and governing body are continually seeking to improve on the school's previous performance and to maintain consistent standards. The school makes increasing use of various performance indicators as well as evidence from other agencies when forming an opinion about its own performance.

Performance data is used effectively and consistently to monitor progress and to plan for improving standards. The school asks the opinion of pupils, parents/carers and the wider community on a regular basis and gives careful consideration to any complaints that are made or suggestions proposed. This process ensures increasing improvement.

The self-evaluation processes that were established recently have already begun to influence the school's plans for maintaining improvement. The school's self-evaluation report conveys an accurate picture of the current situation and clearly indicates those areas that require further development. However, the self-evaluation is in its early days of development and has not been implemented sufficiently consistently to lead to visible improvements in provision and standards.

Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing almost all of the recommendations. Raising literacy standards in key stage 2 continues to be a priority.

A strong professional learning community has been established in the school and has been an essential instrument in promoting improvements. The school has recently established some networks with other schools and partners.

Partnership working: Good

The partnerships with parents, the community and other schools extend the choices for pupils and provide clear advantages to their standards and wellbeing. Parents are very supportive and appreciate the regular information that they receive about the school's activities and their children's progress. The community technology centre, which is located in the school, ensures that the school has a close relationship with people in the local area.

The strong transition links between the local nursery group and the school ensure that the children from the nursery group settle in quickly to school life and that there is progression and continuity in their learning. The school also collaborates closely with the cluster of local primary schools and with the local secondary school in order to moderate teachers' assessments. The comprehensive transition arrangements with the local secondary school prepare the older pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Resource management: Good

Staffing and resources are managed and used effectively to support and improve learning. The school uses teaching and support staff well by fully utilising their time and expertise to cover every aspect of the curriculum.

The effect of the resources on teaching and learning is reviewed regularly and detailed planning is undertaken for future requirements. Systematic and accurate budgetary arrangements are in place and expenditure decisions are linked well with the priorities for improvement and pupils' wellbeing.

In general, when considering the outcomes, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

During four of the past five years, in key stage 1 the percentage of pupils that has achieved level 2 (the expected level in Welsh, mathematics and science combined for seven-year-old children) has been mainly in the lower 50% when compared with local and national benchmarks and with performance levels in similar schools.

In 2011, the proportion of pupils that achieved level 2 or above at the end of key stage 1 in mathematics and science compared favourably with local and national benchmarks. It was also above the levels attained by most other schools in the family of schools. Although the Welsh results were similar to the local benchmarks, they were the lowest in the family of schools. The proportion of pupils that attained level 3 was slightly below the average for the family of schools in every subject.

For three of the past five years, the results for pupils in key stage 2 have been very positive with the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 4 or above (the expected level in Welsh/English, mathematics and science combined) being in the higher 50% when compared with national benchmarks and levels in similar schools. The science results for three of the past five years have been in the highest 25% of the results of the family of schools.

In 2011, the proportion of pupils that achieved level 4 or above at the end of key stage 2 in Welsh, English and mathematics was very similar to the local and national benchmarks and also comparable with levels attained by schools in the same family. Levels in attainment in writing in both languages are below those in oracy and reading. A small proportion of pupils achieved level 5 in any of the subjects.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The pre-inspection questionnaire was completed by 15 parents, which equated to approximately a quarter of the families in the school. A little over half the questionnaires stated that they were completely satisfied with the school and said that:

- their child received good support to settle in when they began at the school and they like the school;
- pupils behave well, their children are expected to work hard and the staff respect every individual;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and they feel safe whilst in school;
- the school helps their child to become more mature and they are well prepared for moving to the next school; and
- the school is well run.

A small number of parents felt that they were uncertain about the school's expectations in terms of homework and that they did not understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Almost all of the 34 learner questionnaires that were completed, made very positive comments about the school. Every child stated that:

- they felt safe in the school, members of staff dealt well with any bullying, and they knew whom to turn to for help; and
- they had many opportunities to have regular physical exercise and they were given help to learn by teachers and adults.

A small proportion of learners disagreed that the homework set helped them to understand their work better.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Wil Williams	Reporting Inspector
Branwen Llewellyn Jones	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Richard Evans	Peer Inspector
Gareth Thomas	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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Year groups and key stages

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

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11