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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on
Cwm Glas Infants School**

**Pant Glas
Llanbradach
Caerphilly
CF83 3PD**

Date of inspection: December 2010

by

Peter Mathias

for

**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

Cwm Glas Infants School is situated in the former mining community of Llanbradach, near Caerphilly which is the Local Authority (LA). It caters for pupils between the age of 3 and 7 years of age. Currently there are 86.5 pupils on roll including 19 full time and 3 part time nursery children. School numbers have increased since the time of the last inspection. About two thirds of pupils come from the local area which is neither economically nor socially advantaged nor disadvantaged. While the school's intake comprises the full range of ability, the majority begin school with levels of basic skills which are in line with those expected and found amongst children of their age.

Nearly 14% of pupils are considered eligible for free school meals which is below the LA and National averages. Fifteen per cent of pupils have some degree of additional learning needs (ALN), which is typical of most schools locally and nationally.

All children come from English-speaking homes of which three are from non-British backgrounds. Nearly all are of Welsh extraction. No child speaks Welsh as a first language.

No pupil was excluded in the previous school year. Three pupils are 'looked after' by the LA.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2009. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher was absent due to ill health. His place was taken by a supply teacher.

The school holds the Healthy Schools award and the Eco Schools bronze and Silver award.

The individual school budget per pupil for Cwm Glas Infants is £4,085.18 which compares with a maximum of £12,169 and a minimum of £2,593.19 for primary schools in the Caerphilly local authority. The school has the 8th highest budget per pupil out of the 75 primary schools within the authority.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- standards in the national teacher assessments are very high and above all other schools in the family of schools;
- standards in Welsh language development and the progress pupils make in this by the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) are excellent;
- the curriculum for the Foundation Phase and for KS1 is very well planned;
- provision for wellbeing is good;
- support for pupils with ALN and for those identified as more able or gifted and talented is thorough and effective;
- learning support assistants make a very positive contribution to the quality of education;
- there is a very strong commitment from staff to work together cohesively to move the school on; and
- the headteacher and governing body provide a purposeful lead.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- although standards in the national teacher assessments are high, there are areas of development in relation to some aspects of leadership and management and quality assurance. While initiatives to address these have been put in place, they have had little time to have a significant impact;
- these include strategies to increase the roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators;
- assessment for learning approaches have been discussed and agreed but are not used consistently across the school; and
- the school improvement plan (SIP) has too many targets and does not have sufficient scope to allow leaders and managers to measure the impact of the actions taken.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school further Cwm Glas Infants School needs to:

- R1 continue the process to develop the leadership and management roles of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators in order to maintain high standards and to help move the school further forward;
- R2 review the SIP so that it is more sharply focused on the major priorities for the school and in judging the impact of the actions taken; and
- R3 put into consistent practice the strategies already agreed to share the learning objectives of sessions and to review them with pupils at their ends.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

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

Over the last three years pupils' performance in the national teacher assessments for seven year olds has been very high with the exception of 2008-2009 when in a small group of children a significant proportion were identified as having ALN. Pupils' results in 2010 indicate that the school is well above nearly all schools with the same kind of free school meal entitlement.

Results in English, mathematics and science have been well above local and national averages since 2006, with the exception of 2008/2009, as have the combined results. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher level (L3) have been above these averages.

Overall, there is no difference in the relative performance of boys compared to girls. However in oracy at level 3 boys do not perform as well as girls, although results are above local and national averages. Trends over time indicate that, with the exception of 2008/2009, standards have been maintained at a high level. When the school's results are compared to those of other schools in the family of schools across Wales to which the school belongs they were above all of the other schools in the family. This is notwithstanding the fact that the school is the eighth most challenged school out of the eleven in its family group.

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In the Foundation Phase, children make good progress in all areas of learning. In KS1 standards are good. In English pupils write well for a range of reasons and in different styles. They take a pride in presenting their work well.

In Mathematics standards are high and in Welsh pupils make very good progress bearing in mind their starting points.

Across the school nearly all pupils speak confidently and listen well. They read with increasing fluency bearing in mind their different ages and abilities. Many pupils achieve good standards in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The majority of pupils by the end of KS1 have good skills in communication, numeracy and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Many KS1 pupils' Welsh language development is excellent.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils have a very positive attitude to school and enjoy taking part in activities to promote healthy living and wellbeing. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be fit and healthy.

Attendance is consistently good at 94% and above the average when compared against similar schools and national figures. Behaviour is good and most pupils are polite and respond well to adults.

Nearly all pupils enjoy school, are well motivated and have positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils are beginning to be involved in deciding what and how they learn in classroom activities.

All pupils take on positions of responsibility willingly within the school. However, many do not fully understand how they can effectively contribute to making decisions about the life of the school.

All pupils show respect, care and concern for each other and relate very well to their teachers and other adults. Many older pupils show initiative and take increasing responsibility for their own welfare and that of other pupils.

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

All pupils throughout the school, including those with ALN and those identified as more able or talented are provided with a broad and balanced range of learning experiences which meets their needs. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Teachers plan a good range of stimulating activities that challenge and extend pupils of all abilities and support those who have additional needs.

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All teachers plan carefully so that key skills in language, numeracy and ICT are developed progressively.

Provision for Welsh language and the Welsh dimension is good. Teachers plan sessions where Welsh is practised and rehearsed systematically and make a point of using Welsh as a means of everyday communication. Many older pupils use Welsh confidently in and around the school. There is a good range of additional visits and visitors to school and during the year, a range of after-school clubs.

The school successfully promotes pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. The school has achieved the bronze and silver Eco-Schools award as a result of initiating recycling, energy, conservation, school garden and healthy living schemes. There is good provision for pupils to understand the need to care for the environment and the diverse world they live in.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. In the Foundation Phase all practitioners have a good understanding of how to plan and organise for children of this age. In the best lessons teachers show good subject knowledge and have very positive relationships with their pupils. They recognise success warmly and all pupils try to please because they know that their efforts are appreciated.

In a very small number of lessons shortcomings relate to teachers taking too long to explain the tasks. They did not in the beginning of sessions set out clearly what was expected and did not review what had been learnt at the end of the lessons.

Teachers mark children's work regularly. The use of two stars and a wish is consistently used to comment positively on children's work and to give guidance on how to improve. Target setting is in place for all children in maths, language and personal and social development and these are shared with parents. However, most children are not aware of their targets and are not able to talk about what they need to do to improve. Nearly all teachers do not ensure pupils are aware of the learning intentions of lessons and success criteria is not shared.

The school is beginning to develop clear systems for tracking and maintaining information on pupils' progress. It makes good use of a range of tests as well as teacher assessments to track the progress of pupils. The school has been involved in moderating processes within the cluster which has ensured judgements on standards are secure. Reports to parents are detailed and helpful and include opportunities for parents to comment, but there are no opportunities for pupils to respond.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. There is good provision for pupils' health and wellbeing. The school promotes effectively the importance of good attendance and the benefits of healthy living, including the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. This has been acknowledged by the school receiving phase four of the Healthy Schools award. Behaviour is well managed through clear understanding of the school ethos and code of conduct and a varied PSE programme. Nearly all pupils have good social

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development and moral development. They relate well to one another, demonstrating good initiative and values of fairness and respect.

Parents are kept well informed of useful information through regular newsletters. The school liaises effectively with a wide range of specialist agencies such as the school nurse, educational psychologist and family intervention team.

There are good procedures and systems for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs. Some additional support is provided effectively through specialist programmes delivered by trained staff within the school. Some pupils who receive support from outside agencies are well managed. Individual education plans (IEPs) have clear targets which are shared with parents and children. They are reviewed regularly, evaluated and updated. The school has an appropriate policy and sound procedures for safeguarding

Learning environment: Good

The school is very inclusive and members of the community are treated with respect. The school works hard to recognise, respect and celebrate diversity and to treat all equally.

There is a good supply of high quality resources which are carefully matched to pupils' learning needs and they stimulate and support learning well. Teachers use interactive whiteboards and other items of ICT equipment imaginatively to engage pupils and to promote their learning.

The accommodation is well-maintained and provides a stimulating setting for pupils to work and learn. The way in which the outdoors has been developed contributes significantly to learning.

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

The newly appointed headteacher has a very clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development and has put in place a wide range of initiatives to maintain high standards and to move the school forwards. These have included initiatives to strengthen the roles of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Staff work closely and effectively together and are committed to school improvement. Performance management objectives are beginning to have a good impact on the quality of education provided.

The school has addressed local and national priorities well. A particular strength is how it has raised standards in Welsh language development. Recently much has been achieved in improving provision in the Foundation Phase and in promoting independent learning. Links with other schools in the area are strong. There are particularly effective links with the primary school to which most pupils transfer.

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The governing body is well led. Governors are very well informed and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There are well established links with the teaching staff and governors are regular visitors to the school. The governing body has a good understanding of the long-term needs of the school. It constructively holds the professional management to account.

Improving quality: Adequate

The process of self-evaluation is developing appropriately and the school is beginning to use a range of evidence as part of the process. Monitoring activities are not yet rigorous enough to make an impact on learning and listening to the views of parents and pupils are recent initiatives. The roles of subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently developed to have a major impact on raising of standards further.

The headteacher and staff work hard to ensure there is a whole-school approach to self-evaluation. School improvement plan (SIP) targets are challenging but do not include measurable outcomes. Targets for improvement are not prioritised to ensure effective and rigorous outcomes. Resources are appropriately allocated to support the targets set and timescales for individual targets are realistic.

The school is currently involved in local professional learning networks (PLNs) and some initiatives have been put in place as a result. These developments have not as yet impacted on classroom practice. The collaboration and sharing of good practice between teachers within the school is beginning to impact on standards. There are no professional learning communities (PLCs) established within the school.

Partnership working: Good

There is a strong partnership between the school and parents. The school benefits from close links with a local private nursery and particularly the primary school to which most pupils transfer. Staff within the school collaborate effectively in planning and assessing pupils' work, and join with neighbouring schools to standardise teachers' assessments. Links with the community are good and pupils benefit from visits to the library, shops and the nearby allotments.

The school makes good use of specialist services such as the ethnic minority support service and the education welfare officer. There are mutually beneficial links with the local community college and the University of Wales where students visit the school as part of their training.

Resource management: Good

Staff and financial resources are well managed. There are sufficient teaching and support staff to comply with the requirements of the Foundation Phase and to support the national curriculum. All staff are appropriately qualified and deployed.

Arrangements for the appraisal of all members of staff are used effectively to identify their development needs. A programme of professional development activities is efficiently organised and funded by grants, supplemented from the school's delegated budget. Teachers benefit from effective arrangements to allow them time for planning, preparation and assessment. Managers have responded appropriately

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to the conditions of the national agreement on raising standards and raising standards and tackling workload.

Expenditure is carefully managed, and relates to the school's identified priorities. Overall, outcomes for pupils are good, with most achieving very well in their time at school. The school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eleven parents completed the questionnaires and overall, they had very positive views of the school. Very few had any negative opinions and these referred only to the ease with which they felt they could approach the school if they had a question or problem.

All were very satisfied and felt that their child liked school and were helped very successfully to settle in and were fairly treated. Many felt that the school was well run.

All parents agreed that their children made good progress and were expected to work hard. They felt that homework built well on what was taught in school. All were happy that their children were encouraged to be healthy and to take exercise regularly.

All thought that their children were safe in school and were well supported. They were well informed about progress and knew the procedures for dealing with complaints. They felt that the school encouraged their children to be responsible and they were well prepared for their next school. All were happy with the range of activities and visits which the school provided.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Mr Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
Mr Christopher Dolby	Team Inspector
Mrs Catherine Jenkins	Lay Inspector
Mrs Amanda Stanford	Peer Inspector
Miss Helen Owen	School Nominee

Contractor:

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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