



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

**Overmonnow Primary School
Rockfield Road
Monmouth
Monmouthshire
NP25 4BA**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

Mr Stephen Dennett

Under Contract 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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Overmonnow Primary School is situated in the town of Monmouth and was opened as a primary school in September 1991. The social and economic circumstances of the area served by the school are of a broad social and economic mix. Most pupils come from around the school, but the school has a special needs unit (SNU) that provides support for groups of pupils with special needs throughout Monmouthshire.

There are currently 396 pupils on roll aged three to 11, including 60 children in the nursery and 16 in the SNU. Around 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the local and national averages. The local authority (LA) looks after three pupils. Approximately 13% of the pupils have additional learning needs (ALN) and 16 have statements of special educational need (SEN). Pupils have a wide range of additional needs, including autistic spectrum disorders, moderate and severe learning difficulties, and profound and multiple difficulties. English is the home language of nearly all pupils, most of whom are from white backgrounds. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language and very few speak Welsh at home. Since the school's last inspection in June 2005, the number on roll has risen.

The 2010–2011 individual school budget per pupil for Overmonnow Primary School is £3,842, which compares with a maximum of £14,200 and a minimum of £2,965 for primary schools in Monmouthshire. The school has the 15th highest budget per pupil out of the 34 primary schools in Monmouthshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is good because:

- Standards in literacy and numeracy are good throughout the school.
- Pupils' wellbeing is good.
- Provision in the foundation phase is particularly good.
- The school provides pupils with a worthwhile range of learning experiences.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- There are good levels of care, support and guidance for all groups of pupils and the provision in the SNU is excellent.
- Leadership and management are good and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- The actions taken by the school to raise standards in mathematics, have led to measurable improvement.
- The senior management team has a clear picture of the school's performance, its strengths and areas for development; they show a strong determination that it should improve further.
- The school's improvement plans are well focused and clearly set out aspects that need improving.
- Effective use is made of assessment information to set targets for improvement and identify groups of pupils that are underperforming.
- Standards at key stage 2 have risen since the school's last inspection and many aspects have now moved from satisfactory to good.

Recommendations

In order to further improve provision and raise standards, the school should:

R1: Improve standards in Welsh language by planning consistent opportunities for using Welsh incidentally in a wide range of class and whole school activities.

R2: Ensure consistency of practice in promoting good behaviour in all classes and lessons throughout the school.

R3: Improve provision for ICT by ensuring there are sufficient resources in classes for all pupils.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Children's attainment on entry to the school is mixed, with a minority performing well below the LA average. They make good progress in nursery and reception.

By the end of key stage 1 in 2010, standards were above the family (a group of schools with similar characteristics) local and national averages in all three core subjects (English, mathematics and science). Standards have risen over the last three years. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was below the family, local and national averages in English, mathematics and science. Compared to schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school was in the upper 50%. In 2010 girls did better than boys at key stage 1 overall.

The school's performance at key stage 2 in 2010 was average, and standards have risen steadily over the past three years. In mathematics, pupils' attainment in 2010 was below the family local and national averages. Attainment in English and science was above all three indicators. Compared with similar schools, the school was in the lower 50% overall, but in the upper 50% for English and science; mathematics was in the lowest 25%. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was below the family, local and national averages in English and mathematics, but in science it was above the local and national averages. Girls did better than boys at key stage 2 in English, but there is no significant difference in mathematics and science.

The school has a unit for pupils with ALN and the results from these pupils' assessments are included in the school's published figures. However, when these results are excluded, the school performed in the top 25% in English and science and top 50% overall; in mathematics, they were in the lower 50%.

In lessons, pupils generally make good progress. They use their speaking skills well when explaining their working out in mathematics, for example. Their reading skills are good and they use them effectively. Most pupils apply their writing skills well to write descriptions of the Iron Man, for example and standards of handwriting and presentation are generally good. Many pupils have good ICT skills, which they use effectively when writing descriptions and conducting research. Most pupils with ALN, including those who attend the SNU, make good progress when compared against their prior attainment.

Overall, pupils' standards in Welsh language skills are adequate. Many pupils' Welsh language is developing well in formal lessons. However, they do not make sufficiently regular use of spoken Welsh, on an incidental basis, as they progress throughout the key stages. In Reception children's Welsh language development is good.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues. They understand how to eat healthy food and the value of regular exercise. Most pupils say they feel safe in school, although occasionally the behaviour of a few pupils is

inappropriate in lessons. The attitude to learning by most pupils is very good. They are courteous to each other, work well in groups and show respect to staff and visitors. Attendance at 94% is just below the LA average but just above the all-Wales average. Most pupils arrive punctually. Many pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular and community activities, which extend their interests and their social and life skills. While the pupil council provides opportunities for members to make decisions there are insufficient arrangements for them to take specific responsibilities. Most pupils show a good understanding of how they learn and how to use key skills such as communication, problem solving and decision-making in their lessons.

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

The school meets the needs of nearly all pupils well. It provides a curriculum which is broad, balanced and coherent, and clearly based on the areas of learning and the skill-based curriculum. Teachers actively involve pupils, particularly in the foundation phase in choosing the content and activities for each topic. Lessons are planned to include a range of tasks which provide a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. All pupils benefit from good learning experiences. A worthwhile range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' learning in key stage 2, although this is less extensive in key stage 1.

The development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is planned well to ensure a clear progression from the foundation phase through key stage 2. Teachers explain clearly in most lessons which skills will be taught and how pupils may know that they have achieved them. Where pupils have difficulties, relevant intervention programmes are in place to address the issue promptly and effectively. Challenging tasks for more able and talented pupils ensure that these pupils often achieve an exceptional standard.

Provision and planning for the promotion of Welsh language skills is satisfactory. The school includes a range of activities that successfully promote aspects of the Welsh dimension across many areas of the curriculum.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is a clear feature of each curriculum topic. The 'eco warriors' are proactive in promoting a wide range of initiatives including conservation of energy and water, and litter-picking. Its members take their responsibilities seriously. Global citizenship is developed well through religious education and geography lessons, for example.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. Teachers plan lessons purposefully to ensure the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. They organise a wide range of interesting tasks to secure pupils' engagement in their learning. The pace of lessons is usually maintained well, and they are well structured to provide opportunities for individual, paired and group activities. However, there are occasions when behaviour management is not sufficiently secure to ensure that all pupils behave in a way which is appropriate to the lesson. Working relationships between teaching and support staff and pupils are good. Learning resources are

varied and interesting, but there is some variation in the effective use of ICT to support learning. Teachers use stimulating questioning well in introductory and plenary sessions; this develops, extends and reviews pupils' learning effectively. Support staff plan and assess pupils' work together with teachers and make a valuable contribution to all pupils' development.

The school has effective policies and procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress and for reporting to parents. In the best examples, marking makes good use of constructive comments to help pupils understand how to improve their work. However, there is some inconsistency in marking and in a few books it merely consists of ticks. Pupils' assessment of their own work and others' is well established. Teachers and pupils work together to set realistic and ambitious targets for improvement. 'Assessment for learning' strategies are used consistently in most lessons. Teachers use the results of their regular assessments of foundation phase outcomes and national curriculum levels, together with some standardised tests to plan their lessons effectively. Annual reports to parents give clear judgements about their children's achievements, and include the opportunity for a meeting with their teacher.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has appropriate policies and arrangements for the promotion of pupils' healthy living and wellbeing. These contribute well to developing positive relationships and to enhancing the quality of life of the pupils. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding them at all levels. Activities such as 'Play Therapy' helps to improve pupils' personal and social skills, and the overall provision for the promotion of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. The pupil council provides opportunities to develop social skills and make decisions affecting others. The teaching of personal and social education is planned well and included across the curriculum. The school works very well with a range of external specialist services to enhance support and provide valuable information and guidance. Overall the provision for pupils with ALN is good. Individual education plans (IEPs) are clear and specific. Targets are reviewed regularly and a formal structure of monitoring progress and identifying the next stage of learning is shared termly with staff. However there is inconsistency in the way IEPs are written and presented. Those pupils who attend the SNU receive very good provision and their specific needs are met very well. The outreach support and advice given by staff of the SNU is greatly valued and is recognised as sector leading practice by the LA and greatly benefits other schools in the authority.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a friendly welcoming environment where all pupils are respected and treated fairly. The school actively promotes equal opportunities and all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and the good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have positive attitudes to diversity. Through a range of activities and visitors to the school pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and values as well as those of others. The accommodation is well maintained and sufficient for the number of pupils. Resources are well matched to pupils needs. However, the lack of available and up to date ICT equipment hinders some aspects of pupils' learning.

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

The quality of leadership is good. The headteacher knows the school well and ensures that the school's aims, objectives and values are shared effectively with all interested parties. He is effectively supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. They have a clear vision for the further development of the school and have high expectations of pupils and staff. They have good systems for securing improvement and ensuring consistency of practice throughout the school. Strong and effective leadership in the foundation phase has meant that all classes are well organised and the foundation phase curriculum is fully implemented. The deputy headteacher has been instrumental in overseeing many of the recent changes in planning, monitoring and assessment and has ensured that these policies are implemented consistently. The governing body supports the professional management of the school well. Its sub-committees have been effective in challenging the school in bringing about necessary improvements. Policies and initiatives are implemented consistently and national and local priorities are met.

Improving quality: Good

The school uses management information and performance data effectively. This is analysed and used to identify areas of underperformance, set realistic objectives and targets and plan for improvement. This information is discussed in senior management team meetings and then shared with school staff and governors. Senior managers have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this is also shared during staff meetings and training days. A range of monitoring activities are carried out which ensure that school's improvement targets are prioritised effectively. The school seeks the views of pupils, parents/carers and the broader community on an annual basis. Professional learning communities within the school and its cluster schools enable staff to develop and share their professional knowledge and best practice. Effective performance management systems are in place.

Partnership working: Good

The school has strong links with the community and has a very supportive and active parent/teacher association. Governors are effective in challenging and supporting the school to ensure the school's improvement priorities are met. Regular communication with parents/ carers ensures that they are well informed about their children's progress, school activities and events. The school works well with its cluster schools and the local comprehensive school. The school has taken a lead in various working parties with local schools and professional learning communities have been established which have produced common policies and projects. There are good arrangements for the standardisation and moderation of the school's assessments. The SNU has set up the charity 'Meeting the Needs', which is very successful at raising funds and has formed very good links with the local community as members on the committee include local businesses and people from related agencies. Good relationships exist with the independently run 'Flying Start' (pre-school) and 'OK Club' (after school provision).

Resource management: Good

Overall, financial resources are managed and deployed effectively to meet priorities in the school's improvement plan. All teachers have appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum effectively contributing to the successful development of pupils' learning experiences. Teachers make good use of planning, preparation and assessment time and statutory requirements are adhered to and good account has been taken of workforce re-modelling arrangements. There is good use of shared resources through the cluster partnership work which contributes to good outcomes for pupils. The school budget resource plan is linked to the school's improvement plan and prioritises areas for the development of strategies. The head and governors review these priorities regularly. The school gives good value for money in terms of pupils' outcomes.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fifty-three parents/carers returned questionnaires. They nearly all agreed that their children like school and that staff expected their children to work hard and do their best. They also nearly all agreed that their children were helped to settle in when they started school. Most parents/carers agreed that their children made good progress. Nearly all parents/carers agreed that the school was well run. A very few parents/carers disagreed homework was appropriate or that they were kept well informed about their children's progress.

Responses to learner questionnaires

There were 99 questionnaires returned by pupils in key stage 2. Nearly all pupils agree that they feel safe in school. They also agree that there are plenty of opportunities to take regular exercise. Nearly all pupils agree that their teachers help them make progress and they know who to ask if they find work difficult. Around half of pupils said they did not think homework helped them understand and improve their work at school. A majority of pupils disagreed that pupils behaved well in class, but most felt that behaviour was good at break times. The majority of pupils felt that the school dealt well with bullying. A few pupils felt they did not have enough computers in the school.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Stephen Dennett	Reporting Inspector
Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Cheryl Wheldon	Peer Inspector
Mr Williams	School Nominee

EPPC/Severn Crossing Ltd
Suite F2A Britannic House
Britannic Way
Llandarcy
Neath
SA10 6JQ

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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