



*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**

**Plascrug C.P. School  
Plascrug Avenue  
Aberystwyth  
Ceredigion  
SY23 1HL**

**Date of inspection: June 2012**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	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

Plascrug Community School is situated in the town of Aberystwyth, which lies on the coast of Ceredigion. The school receives the vast majority of its pupils from the town, although a number of pupils do travel from further afield. English is the main medium of instruction and Welsh is taught as a second language and as a medium for some subjects.

Seventy-five per cent of the school's population are white British while the remaining 25% of pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. In all, pupils come from 38 different countries and 14 pupils receive support for speaking English as an additional language. Less than one per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language. Approximately 35% of pupils live in a disadvantaged area while the remainder are from a variety of backgrounds. Approximately 12% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is lower than the local authority and national averages.

The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and 11. There are 422 pupils on roll. They are taught in 17 classes, including a nursery unit of two classes that caters for both full and part-time children. The school has identified that 17% of pupils have additional learning needs and five pupils have a statement of special educational need.

The school was last inspected in May 2006. Since then, the school roll has risen by approximately 17%. Currently there are 20 full-time and two part-time teachers at the school.

The individual school budget per pupil for Plascrug C.P. School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,348 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Ceredigion is £8,706 and the minimum is £2,987. Plascrug C.P. School is 49th out of the 60 primary schools in Ceredigion in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning during their time in the school;
- standards of pupils' wellbeing are excellent;
- care, support and guidance are of a particularly high standard and fully meet the needs of all pupils; and
- the standards and provision for pupils' Welsh language are outstanding.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- there is a continuing upward trend in pupils' standards;
- the school is well led and staff have high expectations of all pupils;
- leaders provide a range of exceptional opportunities for staff to continually improve their professional skills;
- self-evaluation is very secure and accurate; and
- partnerships are excellent and are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further the school needs to:

R1 sustain and improve the current focus on the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum;

R2 ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school; and

R3 ensure that assessment for learning strategies are consistently implemented across the school.

### What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

The majority of pupils enter the school with skills that are below what is normally expected. During their time in school, nearly all pupils make good progress in their learning.

The performance of seven-year-old pupils over the last four years has not compared favourably with that of similar schools. However, the data shows an upward trend during this period and the most recent teacher assessments indicate that pupils' achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science continues to rise.

The data for 11-year-old pupils shows an upward trend over three years. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (level 4) or above in the core subjects in 2011 was higher than the all-Wales average and the average for similar schools.

In key stages 1 and 2, the percentage of pupils attaining levels higher than expected is exceptionally high when compared to similar schools and all-Wales averages.

There is no significant pattern in the performances of boys compared to girls, or between those pupils entitled to free school meals and those that are not.

The progress made by pupils who have English as an additional language is exceptional. Nearly all these pupils reach the expected level 4 or above by the end of key stage 2. In 2011, all pupils in this category reached the expected level 4 or above in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Pupils identified as more able and talented make excellent progress. In 2011, 18% of the original cohort progressed by four levels in at least one subject in four years.

In nearly all lessons observed, progress and achievement of pupils are good. Most pupils recall previous learning well and they acquire new knowledge and develop their thinking skills effectively. For example, pupils could identify and classify a variety of plant life well during a science lesson.

Pupils' literacy skills are very well developed throughout the school. Many pupils are very articulate and use an increasingly advanced vocabulary in their oral and written work. Pupils' ability to write independently and at length across the curriculum is very well developed. Pupils often read a range of books fluently and confidently.

The standards of Welsh of most pupils are excellent. Although teacher assessments in Welsh last year did not compare favourably with the local authority average, standards observed in oracy, reading and writing clearly show excellent qualities. Most pupils develop quickly into confident Welsh speakers and they use Welsh well in a range of contexts. Reading in Welsh is excellent across all ages and many pupils produce outstanding examples of written work.

## **Wellbeing: Excellent**

Nearly all pupils have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and the importance of physical exercise and what they eat. Most pupils understand the effects of exercise on their bodies and the benefits of this for their health and wellbeing. Pupils have taken a lead role in the development of the school's anti-bullying policy. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe in school and state that instances of oppressive behaviour are rare and dealt with promptly.

The school's most recent attendance percentage is over 94% for the last three terms. This is above local and national averages and has exceeded the local authority's target. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually and very few are regularly late.

There are very strong working relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in classrooms and in the playgrounds. Nearly all pupils show a high level of care, consideration and respect for adults and other pupils. Nearly all pupils are interested in their work, have very positive attitudes to learning and work very effectively with partners and in groups. Most pupils are involved in setting and monitoring their own targets and know what to do to improve their own learning.

Pupils' involvement with the community and decision-making is outstanding. Pupils take part in an innovative intergenerational project. Through this work, pupils have developed a respect and understanding of the needs of senior citizens and have provided them with help with computer skills amongst other things. Pupil representatives also take part in a large multi-agency group to put forward their plans for the development of the school grounds. Through this process pupils have been highly influential in shaping the school grounds as a stimulating outdoor learning environment and exciting play area.

The school council and eco committee understand and perform their roles well. Safety squad members assist the staff enthusiastically by making regular tours of the school to ensure it is a safe environment. Members of the school council and safety squad have influenced positively many areas of school improvement.

School council members have also attended meetings with the school meals service to discuss lunchtime menu options for pupils. As a direct result, the school now provides hot and cold meals for pupils. School council members regularly meet with governors to give updates on progress.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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## **Learning experiences: Good**

The school provides a wide range of challenging and interesting learning experiences for pupils of all ages and abilities. Planning successfully engages the full range of pupils through stimulating activities and provides a good balance between support and challenge.

The school meets the needs of different groups of learners well and this provision leads to very positive outcomes. Provision for more able and talented pupils is very good.

Effective planning is in place to systematically develop subject specific skills and skills across the curriculum. Provision for developing skills in literacy is a significant strength and the provision for Welsh language development is sector leading. However, the provision for developing information and communication technology skills across the curriculum is not as well developed.

The school creates an outstanding ethos that promotes interest and enthusiasm towards the Welsh language. It also provides excellent opportunities to ensure that pupils develop a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards the subject. School strategies and arrangements ensure that pupils have a growing awareness of the culture and heritage of Wales. Plascrug has won the Second Language Action Song Competition in the Urdd National Eisteddfod for the last nine years showing a consistent effort towards excellence.

Provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship is of a very high standard. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities, within and beyond the curriculum, to develop a very good awareness of sustainability issues. The school is an extremely inclusive environment with outstanding features in the provision for global citizenship.

The school provides a wide range of activities, within and beyond the curriculum, that support and enhance learning to good effect.

### **Teaching: Good**

The overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers demonstrate up-to-date subject knowledge and use a wide range of approaches and strategies to effectively engage and motivate pupils. Where teaching is best the pupils benefit from lessons offering the correct level of support and challenge delivered at a lively but manageable pace. Strategies employed by teaching staff, such as effective questioning techniques, are helping pupils to develop good thinking skills and enhance pupil involvement and progress in lessons. Teachers successfully develop pupils' ability to work independently and collaboratively across the age range. Where teaching is not as successful, the questioning is less effective, the pace of the lesson is slower and not all tasks are understood by the pupils sufficiently in order for them to proceed with their learning.

Teachers use a good and varied range of resources to enhance the learning experiences. The outdoor environment is particularly well used for practical learning experiences that include reading activities, role-play and investigative science. Adult support is consistently good and well deployed. Support staff work with skill, purpose and enthusiasm to improve outcomes for pupils.

Pupil progress is tracked effectively. Extensive and detailed records are kept and are used well to inform future planning. Work is frequently marked and pupils benefit from constructive oral and written feedback that helps them to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In most lessons, assessment for learning strategies are used well to enable pupils to identify learning goals, reflect on their own performance and set targets for future learning. However, these strategies are not consistently embedded in all classes. Reports to parents are clear and they are well informed about their children's achievements and progress.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

Leaders place significant emphasis on the wellbeing of pupils. They provide pupils with numerous opportunities to be physically active and to choose a healthy diet.

The school has very strong and supportive links with a number of specialist services and outside agencies that ensure high quality support and guidance to pupils and parents. As a result of the very good provision to foster pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, pupils develop a high level of understanding of important values. This is reflected in the respect they have for each other and adults. Very positive relationships lead to exemplary pupils' behaviour. Pupils are valued equally and innovative provision is in place to celebrate diversity. For example, a weekly key stage 2 Muslim assembly takes place at the same time as Christian collective worship.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding and helps them to make very good progress. The school co-ordinates its extensive range of provision very well. Teachers identify any additional learning needs early and monitor pupil progress consistently and to good effect. Staff incorporate pupils' views into their detailed and appropriate individual education plans well. Relationships with parents and external agencies, such as the sensory service, are highly effective in ensuring that pupils' needs are well met. The training and deployment of staff is an outstanding feature. For example, the integrated approach to the use of sign language ensures that pupils in every class successfully take part in all lessons. The school engages proactively with parents to ensure that they are well informed and fully involved in decisions that affect their children.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

### **Learning environment: Excellent**

The inclusive ethos of the school is an outstanding feature. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and participate fully in the life of the school, whatever their needs or circumstances. The school uses the diverse nature of the population innovatively to enhance provision effectively. The international day at school is a good example of the school celebrating diversity and maximising opportunities for pupils to learn about and appreciate the backgrounds of other members of the school community.

The school provides a good range of learning resources that match well to the needs and interests of pupils. Accommodation is of a very high quality, is well maintained and provides an environment that promotes successful learning. The outdoor learning areas are innovatively developed to effectively use available space. This enhances learning and play experiences for all pupils. The school has ensured that pupils have been fully involved in the development of the outstanding outdoor areas.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>
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<b>Excellent</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher and deputy-headteacher have high expectations of staff and pupils and work together very effectively to ensure that the school is well organised and managed. Leaders and managers have a clear focus on raising standards and use data very well to monitor and challenge the school's performance.

A few senior managers are fairly new in post but their clear roles and responsibilities enable them to make a positive contribution to improvements. Leaders and managers at all levels are effective and they fulfil their roles and responsibilities well. Regular management team meetings, staff meetings and a sound performance management system also contribute well to improvements in learning and teaching.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations well. Governors support the school effectively and have a detailed understanding of the performance of the pupils and how this compares with that of pupils in other similar schools. They have a good knowledge of the strengths of the school, school priorities for development and school finances. Governors challenge the school rigorously about the standards and quality it achieves.

The school is making very good progress in introducing initiatives that meet local and national priorities, such as assessment for learning, the development of literacy strategies and the promotion of the Welsh language. These are having a very positive impact on pupils' standards of achievement.

### **Improving quality: Excellent**

There is a very secure strategy for self-evaluation that draws on a wide range of first-hand evidence. This evidence includes the performance of pupils, classroom observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the views of pupils and parents. As a result of seeking parents' views, the school recently changed its reports on pupils' progress.

The outcomes of self-evaluation provide a very accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development. This information is used very effectively to determine clear priorities and targets for school improvement that are contained in a detailed three-year plan. Implementation of this plan is having a very positive impact on improvements, with priorities such as literacy, Welsh and assessment for learning developing extremely well.

The school is developing as a very strong learning community. There is a wide range of exceptional opportunities for staff to improve their professional skills and knowledge.

Good mentoring for teachers new to the school and job shadowing opportunities enable these teachers to develop effective teaching skills. Teachers visit other schools to observe good practice and also model lessons within the school to improve standards. Senior staff have continued to develop professionally and as a result have a good knowledge of leadership skills and improving quality. In addition, a recent family of schools network is successfully helping the school to develop effective literacy strategies.

The school provides outstanding opportunities for all staff to learn the Welsh language and develop their Welsh language skills through a combination of long courses and weekly training sessions. These are having a very positive impact on pupils' standards of Welsh.

Throughout the school, all staff benefit from a comprehensive programme of training opportunities that supports their continuous professional development and enhances very effectively the school's capacity for making improvements.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The school has excellent strategic partnership links, which have a significant impact on pupil standards and extend learning practices. Links with many local businesses are particularly successful in providing valuable resources and support.

The school has very good links with European schools, which has led to a recent teacher exchange and placement.

The school plays an active role in joint-governance arrangements with the higher education establishment and secondary schools in the local authority.

The school's relationship with parents is very strong and the substantial funding donated by the parent and teachers association provides for useful extra resources.

Strong links have been forged with preschool groups to ensure effective transfer to the nursery class. The school also collaborates closely with its cluster of schools to plan co-operatively, share experiences and exchange practices.

The school also leads on very effective links with other schools in the family and this has led to improvements in pupils' standards of literacy. This collaboration has enhanced and helped to develop new strategies in writing and Foundation Phase planning.

### **Resource management: Good**

Staff and financial resources are deployed effectively to support priorities for development. The school has systematic and thorough budgetary arrangements and expenditure is linked very well with the school's objectives, targets and plans.

Full advantage is taken of the time and expertise of teaching staff to deal with all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time and arrangements for this are managed skilfully. Support staff are deployed very well and have a positive impact on the attainment of all pupils.

Performance management identifies opportunities for the development and training of all staff. These are planned very effectively in relation to school priorities.

There is generally a good range of learning resources and these are managed well.

School accommodation and outside learning areas have been developed to a very high standard.

The school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Performance data over the last four years shows an upward trend in the performance of seven-year-olds. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level 2 or above in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science over this period has been below the family of similar schools and all-Wales averages. The school has been in the lower 50% when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The percentage of pupils attaining level 2 or above in English and mathematics shows an upward trend, with pupils performing better than the all-Wales average in both subjects in 2011. Attainment in science shows a fluctuating pattern with performance usually below similar schools and all-Wales averages.

Pupils attaining the higher level 3 in English, mathematics and science were all above the family and national averages and placed the school in the top 25% when compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The data for 11-year-old pupils shows an upward trend over three years, with the school performing better than the similar schools and national averages over the last two years in the core subjects of English and mathematics and in 2011 for science. The school has been in the higher 50% over the last two years when compared to schools within the same free-school-meal band.

The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 or above in all the core subjects has been significantly higher than similar schools and all-Wales averages for the past two years.

There is no significant pattern of difference between the relative performance levels of boys and girls or between the group of pupils entitled to free school meals and those pupils who are not entitled to free school meals. Pupils who have English as an additional language and those identified as more able and talented make exceptional progress.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

Estyn received 101 responses from their learner questionnaire. All responses were very positive and compared favourably to the national average. Two responses were within two percentage points of the national average.

All pupils feel safe in school, they all feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and they feel that teachers and other adults in the school help them learn and to make good progress. Nearly all pupils know to whom to turn if they are worried, they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard, and they feel that they are doing well at school. Most pupils say that the school deals well with any instances of bullying, and they think that there are lots of opportunities for them to get regular exercise, that their homework helps them to improve their work in school and that they have enough resources to do their work. Many feel that other children behave well in class and on the yard during break times.

The 21 responses from parents are all positive, with around half of responses comparing favourably to the national average.

All parents that expressed an opinion either agreed or agreed strongly that:

- their child likes this school;
- their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started;
- their child is making good progress;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs; and
- their child is well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their education.

Nearly all parents agree that:

- they are satisfied overall with the school;
- pupils behave well in school;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- their child is safe in school;
- there is a good range of activities including trips or visits; and
- the school is well run.

Most parents agree that staff expect their child to work hard and do their best and that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility. Many agree that teaching is good, that homework that is given builds well on what their child learns in school and that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. Most parents also agreed that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem and that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Michael Hayes	Reporting Inspector
Mike Maguire	Team Inspector
Hazel Hughes	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Richard Lloyd	Peer Inspector
Mena Sweeney (Deputy Headteacher)	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

### 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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	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**

### **National Curriculum**

#### **Expected National Curriculum levels**

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

#### **Core subject indicator in all key stages**

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

#### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.