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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on
Dafen Primary School**

**Lôn Yr Ysgol
Dafen
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 8LL**

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Mr Jeffrey Harries

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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Context

Dafen Primary School is located in the village of Dafen on the eastern outskirts of the town of Llanelli. The school, which is maintained by Carmarthenshire Local Authority, serves a predominantly urban area. The school states that around 40% of the area is economically disadvantaged and the remainder neither prosperous nor subject to economic disadvantage. The pupils reflect the full ability range. No pupils come from a home where Welsh is the predominant language.

Currently 156 full-time pupils aged between 3-11 years attend the school, 13 of whom are from a minority ethnic background. There are seven classes, one of which has mixed age pupils. Pupil numbers have declined by around 25% since the last inspection.

Around 21% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure above the local and national averages. Thirty eight pupils (27%) are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), including three pupils who have statements of SEN.

The headteacher has been in post since 1995. There have been few significant changes to the school since it was last inspected in November 2004. The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Dafen Primary School is £3,014 which is the 109th highest out of the 114 primary schools in Carmarthenshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress in learning;
- teaching is generally of good standard;
- the school provides good learning experiences for all pupils; and
- most pupils enjoy school and feel valued and well supported.

Prospects for improvement

Although the leadership of the school has strengths, the prospects for improvement are adequate because since the last inspection:

- insufficient progress has been made in developing pupils' bilingual skills;
- the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards of achievement is insufficiently developed;
- outcomes of self-evaluation procedures are not sufficiently prioritised in school development planning; and
- there are insufficient links with employers to further develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 improve oracy skills in English and pupils' bilingual skills;
- R2 further develop the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards of achievement across all areas of learning and utilise the outcomes of self-evaluation in order to set and prioritise targets for improvement;
- R3 strengthen strategies of assessment for learning;
- R4 set whole-school targets to raise attendance levels; and
- R5 broaden pupils' experiences of the world of work and entrepreneurship.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress made in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the local authority which will report its findings to Estyn.

Main findings

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

On entry to the school, around half of the pupils display well below average skills in listening, speaking and numeracy. However, pupils make good progress towards the outcomes of the Foundation Phase and most continue to make good progress year on year.

At the upper end of key stage 1 in 2010, learners' attainment according to teacher assessment in the national curriculum (NC) core subject of English was below local, national and the family of schools' averages, similar in mathematics and above in science. This resulted in the school being in the bottom 50% of schools but above the lowest 25% of performing schools. This was an improvement on the three previous years. Learners' attainment at level 3, the highest level available for seven year olds, was slightly below the local, national and family of similar schools in Wales' averages. However, it was significantly higher than the three previous years. Boys performed significantly lower than girls.

At the upper end of key stage 2 in 2010, learners' attainment in English and mathematics was lower than the local, national and family of schools' averages, and similar in science. Learners' attainment at level 5, the highest level available for 11 year-olds, was similar to the local, national and family of similar schools in each subject. In comparison with similar schools in Wales, the school's performance was in the bottom 25% and lower than the average for the family of schools. The school states that the percentage of learners with SEN was higher in this year group than in previous years. Standards of attainment were in the top 25% of schools in 2008 and the top 50% in 2009. Boys' performance was well above that of girls in 2010.

Overall, pupils progress well in their skills development and achieve good standards in listening, reading and writing. However, pupils' oracy skills are less well developed together with bilingual skills which are below expectations. They achieve good standards in numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) and make good application of both in, for example, English, science and design and technology. Pupils' creative skills are very good, particularly evident in music and art.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils feel happy and safe in school; they are valued and well supported. In general, pupils work hard and contribute well in lessons. They work well both independently and in grouped activities. Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. Most state they are able to get their work done without interference from others and minor instances of bullying are dealt with appropriately by the school. Pupil attendance for 2009-2010 is 91.7% which is below the national average with no whole-school targets set for improvement.

School's links with the community are well developed and is a strong feature. Pupils benefit from these activities and make a notable contribution to their learning experiences, confidence and performing skills.

The school and eco councils are actively involved in making decisions and ensure that pupils' views are heard and where appropriate put into action. The school council has been proactive in promoting improvements to the outdoor facilities. Pupils show a good awareness of health issues and healthy living. They eat healthily in school and most take part in a good range of physical exercise activities during and out of school activities.

Pupils show respect, care and concern for each other and relate well to their teachers and other staff.

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

The school provides a wide and varied range of curricular experiences which for the most part effectively meet the needs of pupils. Lessons are generally effectively planned and learning experiences give well focused consideration to pupils of differing abilities and backgrounds.

Extra-curricular experiences feature prominently in the school's provision and the school effectively utilises the resources of the local community, sporting and voluntary organisations to widen the learning experiences of pupils. Although links with local employers exist and entrepreneurial activities are promoted they are areas for further development.

Planning and provision for the development of mathematical, ICT, reading and writing skills across the curriculum are overall effective although the focus on extended writing skills is less prominent. Strategies to further develop oracy skills are at an early stage of development. Provision for the promotion of problem solving skills is developing well while the focus on creative skills is very good. Overall, pupils are given good opportunities to work individually and in groups.

Provision to promote awareness of the Welsh cultural dimension is good. Positive attitudes are fostered towards the Welsh language and good examples of using the language were observed in a minority of classes. However, procedures and strategies to promote the progressive use of bilingualism in various curricular areas and in more informal situations are insufficiently developed.

Pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship is good. Environmental issues are given a high priority by the school and the promotion of global citizenship and an understanding of the wider world are strong features of the provision.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good with an effective range of teaching strategies utilised. There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers and teaching

assistants are effectively deployed. For the most part work is suitably differentiated for pupils of differing abilities. Pupils' learning is effectively extended through appropriate questioning and learning resources are effectively used; most lessons develop at a good pace. In the best examples, lesson objectives are very clearly shared with pupils and revisited during the course of the lesson. Pupils' work is regularly marked and in the best examples ways of improving their work are clearly noted.

Appropriate procedures are in place to assess pupils and to set individual targets. A recently introduced electronic tracking system is bringing an added rigour to the process. Strategies to promote assessment for learning procedures are in place and although at a relatively early stage of development are beginning to have a positive effect. This is an area that the school has targeted for further development. The involvement of pupils in target setting and evaluating progress are also at an early stage of development. Annual reports to parents meet requirements and provide information of a good quality for parents and carers about the progress of their child.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Overall, parents and carers receive a good range of information about the life and work of the school. Arrangements for helping children to settle well when they start school are good as are those for transferring pupils to secondary schools. There is good provision for pupils' well being and the promotion of healthy living is a strong feature. Many of the initiatives in the healthy schools scheme have had a positive effect on the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Matters relating to health and safety were raised with the school.

Overall, pupils' moral, social and cultural development are well promoted. The personal and social education programme, together with periods of collective worship, make important contributions in these areas. Pupils' spiritual development is less well promoted. Opportunities for quiet reflection on the topics and issues under focus during periods of collective worship are limited.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils. All staff have recently benefited from updated training in relation to a wide range of school policies relating to safeguarding, well being and equality. Partnership with the specialist services is strong.

Good procedures are in place for identifying pupils with additional learning needs and, overall, pupils are well supported. The SEN co-ordinator together with a number of support staff make an effective contribution and most pupils make good progress in relation to individual targets. Good support is provided for those pupils with English as an additional language and the more able and talented.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive and welcoming community. Well focused policies and procedures ensure equality of opportunity. Good strategies are in place to promote and celebrate diversity. Staff work hard to ensure a positive learning environment where pupils' efforts are acknowledged.

Evidence during the inspection indicated that, despite the very cold weather conditions, very good use was made of the well resourced outdoor learning areas.

The accommodation offers a good physical learning environment. Pupils benefit from a large hall, library and SEN learning area. School curricular and social arrangements are eased by the location of a separate dining area. There are good quality displays of pupils' work around the school. One area that detracts from the accommodation provision is the separate and isolated location for nursery children.

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

The headteacher has a sound understanding of the needs of the school. He promotes positive behaviour and values and is particularly well supported by the deputy headteacher. This leads to a school ethos where pupils and staff feel valued.

Leaders have clear aims and strategic objectives, but they are not always implemented and monitored in a timely way. As a result, the school has been unsuccessful in making improvements in some key areas since the last inspection.

Leaders have recently begun making use of data to monitor performance; however this analysis has not yet led to action plans focussed on the main findings. Management and committee structures do not consistently address core issues or address issues of under-performance robustly.

Governors have a sound understanding of their roles and support the school appropriately in their role as a critical friend. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations well.

The school pays appropriate attention to national and local priorities, such as delivery of the Foundation Phase and responsibilities within the School Effectiveness Framework.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school plans for improvement adequately. The school has an accurate understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses; however there is no comprehensive self-evaluation timetable.

Recent self-evaluation takes into account the views of staff and parents/carers and there are examples of improvements made as a result of such consultation.

The School Development Plan identifies priorities for improvement. However outcomes are not rigorously assessed, and as a result there is little evidence that action plans have led to measurable improvements in standards. The school's self-evaluation is not sufficiently embedded in strategic planning.

The school's response to the recommendations of the previous inspection has not led to significant improvement. Improving bilingualism, developing the role of subject

co-ordinators, improving monitoring and developing links with industry remain areas for improvement.

The school is developing adequately as a professional learning community. There are some examples of good practice being shared within and beyond school.

Partnership working: Good

The school works well with a number of strategic partners to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The school has strong links with the community, good liaison and communication with parents/carers and works effectively with other agencies. The school's implementation of the Language and Play initiative is a particularly good example of links with parents leading to positive outcomes.

Useful links exist with other providers. The best examples lead to an improvement in standards, for example through the pooling of resources with the partner secondary school. However, links with local employers are underdeveloped.

Transition plans are comprehensive and ensure a successful continuation in learning and wellbeing.

Resource management: Good

Leaders manage resources effectively and efficiently. The school is well staffed to teach the curriculum effectively and the deployment of staff ensures good use of their time, expertise and experience.

Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time, and this has a positive impact on standards.

The school is particularly effective in deploying teaching assistants for example by contributing to raising standards in Literacy and Numeracy through withdrawal sessions, or by helping the school meet the requirements of the National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload'.

Leaders are successful in keeping the costs of the existing provision under review, and make appropriate adjustments where necessary, for example in relation to non-viable class sizes.

The school has a very good range of learning resources, for example ICT equipment, a well-stocked library and a wide range of musical instruments. The provision of such resources leads to good opportunities and outcomes for pupils.

The school provides very good value for money in terms of the use of the budget allocated to the school.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 17 parents. This was a significantly small proportion of the parents. Overall, they expressed positive views about the school.

All parents believe their children are making good progress at the school and that members of staff have high expectations of pupils. They also state that the quality of teaching is good, their child is safe in school and is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.

Many parents are satisfied with the school. They believe their children behave well, are given appropriate homework and are given additional support in relation to any particular individual needs. They state that the school helps their child become more mature and take on responsibility. A few parents do not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints and are unsure if their child is well prepared to move on to the next school.

Response to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 74 pupils. All pupils state that they feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they are upset. They all believe that the school teaches them how to keep healthy with lots of chances to get regular exercise. They all say that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress and can turn to them when the work becomes hard.

Most pupils state they are doing well in school and that homework helps them to improve their school work. They feel they have sufficient resources and equipment to do their work. Nearly all pupils feel that children behave well in class and at playtimes and that the school deals well with any bullying.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Jeffrey Harries	Reporting Inspector
Brinley W Jones	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Tristan Roberts	Peer Inspector
Iolan Greville	School Nominee

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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