



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
Meidrim Primary School
Meidrim
Carmarthen
SA33 5QN

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Dorothy Morris

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2010: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Context

Meidrim School is a community primary school maintained by Carmarthenshire Local Authority (LA). It is situated in the centre of the village and serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area.

Children are admitted into the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they attain their fourth birthday. Currently, there are 39 pupils between three and 11 years of age on the register. Numbers have increased over recent years.

According to the school, the area overall is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Thirteen per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals.

Pupils represent the full range of ability. Eight (21%) of them have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN), including two pupils who hold a statement of SEN.

In the Foundation Phase and in year (Y) 2, Welsh is the main medium of education. In key stage 2 (KS2), pupils are taught through the medium of English and Welsh. Some 82% of pupils come from homes where English is the main language spoken.

The headteacher has been in post since September 1989.

The individual school budget per pupil in 2009-2010 for Meidrim School is £3738 which compares with a maximum of £17415 and a minimum of £3014 for primary aged pupils in Carmarthenshire. The school has the 48th highest budget per pupil of the 114 primary schools in Carmarthenshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

Current performance is good because:

- pupils, including the less able, make good progress;
- teaching is good overall;
- the school provides relevant and interesting learning experiences for pupils;
- staff are committed and know their pupils well;
- the school operates effectively as a close, family community.

Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- school data over time shows that pupils make consistent progress in their learning and achieve their targets;
- the headteacher provides sound leadership and has a clear understanding of the school's needs;
- there is good team work with effective use of teachers' expertise;
- staff and governors are very committed and work effectively in partnership to develop the school further;
- teachers are taking appropriate steps to strengthen aspects of planning for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 strengthen pupils' Welsh oral and writing skills further;
- R2 strengthen the planning to develop pupils' basic and key skills more consistently throughout the school;
- R3 refine the school development plan to focus more on specific approaches to improve standards of achievement; and
- R4 extend the use of assessment procedures, including the role of the pupils themselves in the process.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The progress made will be monitored by the LA.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The achievements of pupils on entry are very broad. They make good progress during their time at the school.

In the National Curriculum (NC) assessments over the last three years, the number of pupils assessed at the end of both key stages has been fewer than five in many of the years and as a result national and county comparisons must be considered carefully. The number of pupils with SEN within the cohorts also affects outcomes. There is no consistent difference between the performance of boys and that of the girls although there are some variations.

In NC assessments over three years, pupils' results at the end of key stage 1 (KS1) in science are higher than national, county and family results in most years. Results in mathematics show improvement with the latest results comparing favourably with national, county and family averages. Results in Welsh are uneven and are lower than national, county and family results. Even so, the percentage of pupils that achieves above the expected level, which is level 3, in Welsh compares favourably with national, county and family results in most years. In mathematics and science also, the percentage of pupils that achieves level 3 compares very favourably with national, county and family results. In comparison with other schools across Wales, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the overall results vary between the lowest 25% and the highest 50% of schools.

In NC assessments over three years, pupils' results at the end of KS2 in English, mathematics and science compare favourably with national, county and family results in the majority of years. However, results in Welsh are lower than national, county and family averages and have an impact on the school's overall averages. The percentage of pupils that achieves above the expected level, namely level 5, is more uneven. In English, the percentage is higher than national, county and family averages in the majority of years. It is more uneven in other subjects but shows improvement in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools across Wales, based on the percentage of pupils that is entitled to free school meals, the results overall vary between the lowest 50% and the highest 25% of schools.

Pupils who have a wide range of additional learning needs make good progress. Pupils entitled to free school meals also make consistent progress in line with their ability and level of development. School data shows that more able pupils develop well.

The majority of pupils make productive use of their key skills in a range of tasks across the curriculum. There are examples of good work in information and communications technology (ICT), in the use of numeracy skills, and in the use of thinking and problem solving skills in subjects such as science. Within the range of pupils' abilities, reading standards are good overall. Standards in writing in English

and Welsh are more uneven and reflect an insecure grasp of correct spelling patterns and syntax, particularly in Welsh in KS2.

The development of pupils' Welsh skills is uneven. Overall, pupils whose mother tongue is Welsh and the more able learners make good progress. The progress of the remainder is adequate. The majority of pupils who join the KS2 class without any Welsh make consistent progress.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' wellbeing is good. They have a secure understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and safe. They understand the value of undertaking physical exercise and eating healthily. Almost all pupils show good attitudes towards learning and engage in their tasks enthusiastically. They work well with others in groups and in pairs. During discussions they state that they feel safe in school. They gain sound social skills for life outside school.

Pupils' punctuality and attendance levels (94%) are good. They behave well and are courteous to staff and visitors.

The use of questionnaires and discussion to seek pupils' opinions on aspects of school life and provision is a good development. Membership of the school council and the eco committee develops pupils' discussion and decision making skills effectively. There are good examples of the school's partnership with the community, and the pupils benefit greatly from them.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
-----------------------------------------------	-------------

Learning experiences: Adequate

The updated curricular plans provide an adequate range of learning experiences which kindle pupils' interests, and deal appropriately with the requirements of the NC, the Foundation Phase and religious education. The school is in the process of updating the remaining subject plans in accordance with the requirements of the 2008 Curriculum. Teachers work together well to plan flexible programmes and use their subject expertise effectively.

There are curricular plans in place to develop Welsh. However, they lack sufficient structure to address the wide range of pupils' linguistic needs.

Through experiences, such as celebrating the school's centenary and visits to places of interest, appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about their local area and the history and culture of Wales. Pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is promoted effectively through curricular subjects, specific projects and the links with a school in Kenya. The school operates in a sustainable way from day to day.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and teachers and experienced support staff work together effectively as a team. Teachers have good subject knowledge and succeed in making the lessons interesting for pupils. They use a wide range of teaching methods and appropriate resources to support the learning. In the best practice, pupils are offered purposeful opportunities to work more independently within their groups or as pairs. There is a good working relationship between pupils and staff.

Pupils' progress is assessed and tracked regularly and there is effective use of the information to identify and support pupils' individual learning needs. Pupils' work is marked and they are offered good oral feedback. In the best practice, teachers' written comments on pupils' work provide good guidance to enable them to improve the standard of their work. Praise is used well to encourage less confident pupils in the classroom.

The focus on using assessment for learning strategies is a feature that is developing. Pupils set their personal targets with the teachers and the majority can discuss their progress and identify simply what they need to do in order to improve.

Parents/carers are regularly informed of their children's achievements, wellbeing and development. The annual reports include appropriate curricular comments but specific comments in some subjects are more limited.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision to foster pupils' wellbeing, care and safety is good and there is effective collaboration with a number of agencies, which provide productive support to pupils and staff.

Through involvement in the Healthy Schools scheme, the personal and social education (PSE) programme, the contribution of visitors and circle time, pupils' health and wellbeing are promoted effectively. These programmes are also central to promoting pupils' understanding of equal opportunities, fair play, equality and diversity. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

There are good procedures in place for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs. They are coordinated effectively by the headteacher. Individual education plans are provided for each one of these pupils and they are reviewed and updated appropriately through consultation with parents and carers. Most of the additional support is provided for pupils in classes, and they are occasionally withdrawn from lessons to receive specific support. As a result, pupils make the expected progress towards achieving the targets set for them. Overall, more able pupils are suitably challenged in the classroom through tasks and relevant support.

There are effective learning experiences to promote pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The school operates as a close, warm and inclusive community. The staff are fully aware of the varied needs of pupils and ensure equal opportunities for each pupil to benefit from the full range of educational provision. Pupils with disabilities are not treated less favourably.

Although the building provides sufficient space to teach the children, there are deficiencies such as no hall and limited storage areas. The improvements to the outdoor areas, such as the garden and a covered play area for the children in the Foundation Phase, offer good learning resources. They are also an example of the benefits of the collaboration between the pupils, the school, parents and the local community.

Overall, there are sufficient resources, and the displays across the school are interesting and demonstrate pupils' work. The effective use of staff expertise and of suitable resources contributes well towards creating a positive learning environment for pupils.

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

Leadership: Good

The headteacher has a sound understanding of the school's needs and staff work together well as a team to develop the provision and to improve standards. Pupils and staff feel that they are appreciated and each of them has specific responsibilities to develop the school as a learning community. This has a good effect on the school's ethos. The role of subject coordinators continues to develop with the aim of giving more consideration to evaluating pupils' standards when observing lessons.

The school satisfies national and local priorities well and has plans to extend the provision for PSE and aspects of global citizenship. Improving pupils' communication skills in Welsh continues to be an appropriate area to receive attention.

Governors undertake their roles and responsibilities conscientiously and they have a strong interest in the school's life. They visit regularly and monitor the provision well. They attend suitable training and are beginning to challenge the school as critical friends.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's planning for improvement is adequate. Subject leaders annually evaluate progress in the core subjects but the methods for monitoring progress in the foundation subjects are more informal. The school development plan includes appropriate matters to receive attention. Where there is a clear focus in the plan, such as raising pupils' standards in areas such as reading, progress is good. However, the steps identified for improving other areas, such as developing pupils' oral skills and spelling in Welsh, are not specific enough.

Staff have been included in a good range of training and development opportunities. These include working more in partnership with other local schools. Teachers' expertise is used effectively to develop aspects of its provision and to raise standards.

The school has made consistent progress in addressing many of the recommendations in the previous inspection. They include improving the provision for developing pupils' ICT skills, tracking pupils' progress, and developing the role of the governing body in the self-evaluation process. Raising standards in pupils' writing in Welsh continues to be an area for improvement.

Partnership working: Good

The school nurtures a range of useful partnerships. The improvements with regard to developing the outdoor resources and the school environment are an example of effective partnership with parents and the community. Working in partnership with primary schools in the area is extending in order to share ideas and develop aspects of the curriculum. The partnerships and the transfer plans with the secondary schools enable older pupils to be well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school works closely with the LA improvement officer to develop the school further.

Visits to the community and visitors from the community make an important contribution in enriching pupils' experiences. The schools' parents and friends association makes a good contribution towards adding to school funds in order to purchase additional learning materials.

Resource management: Good

Teachers have appropriate knowledge and expertise to present the curriculum effectively. Permanent support staff are deployed well and work effectively alongside teachers in the classroom and in outdoor activities. There are effective performance management procedures in place.

There are sufficient resources for most of the curricular subjects and the school has plans to develop the physical education provision further.

Expenditure is clearly linked to priorities in the school development plan and governors monitor and manage expenditure well in order to ensure that they remain within budget. The school provides good value for money in respect of the use made of the budget allocated to it.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Approximately half the parents/carers completed the questionnaire. All say that their children enjoy attending school and that they have settled well. The majority believe that their children are making progress and developing as mature individuals. The majority believe that children are treated fairly and with respect and that they behave well. They feel that their children are safe at the school. The majority feel that children receive sufficient additional support in relation to their needs. Many of the parents who answered indicate that they are satisfied that homework builds on what their child learns in school, that there are sufficient processes for preparing children for moving on to their next school, and that there are appropriate procedures for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

The questionnaire was completed by most pupils in KS2. Each one states that they felt safe, enjoy school and believe they are doing well. They also believe that there are sufficient resources to enable them to learn well and that they are encouraged to shoulder responsibilities that prepare them well for the next class or school. There is agreement that the school helps them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Almost all feel that pupils behave well at all times, including during break time and lunch time. They also believe that homework helps them to improve their work in school.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Miss Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Mr Jeff Harries	Team Inspector
Mr Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Mrs Doris Edwards	Peer Inspector
Mrs Susan Harries	School Nominee

Contractor: EPPC-Severn Crossing Ltd
Suite F2A, Britannic House, Llandarcy, Neath SA10 6JQ

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

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