



*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**

**Mynachlog Nedd Junior School  
St Johns Terrace  
Neath Abbey  
Neath  
SA10 7ND**

**Date of inspection: November 2011**

**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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**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh)**

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## Context

Mynachlog Nedd Junior School is a local authority maintained school located in Neath Abbey, near the town of Neath. The local authority is Neath Port Talbot.

There are 161 pupils on roll. There are five full-time and three part-time teachers in four single-age classes and two mixed-age classes.

The majority of pupils come from local residential areas, which are considered to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Pupils start at the school at seven years of age from Neath Abbey Infant School. Ten per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the local authority and Wales averages.

The vast majority of pupils come from homes where English is the first language. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, or who have English as an additional language. Only one speaks some Welsh at home.

Twenty-five per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. No pupils have a statement of educational needs.

No children have been excluded from the school during the twelve months prior to the inspection.

The individual school budget per pupil for Mynachlog Nedd Junior School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £2,987 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £21,718 and the minimum is £2,648. Mynachlog Nedd Junior School is 62nd out of the 71 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot 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>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school;
- pupils achieve high standards of literacy skills in lessons;
- a significant proportion of pupils achieve at higher levels (level 5+) in teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2;
- the school generally performs well within its family;
- standards of teaching are generally good across the school; and
- the school provides a wide variety of stimulating learning experiences that positively promote pupils' engagement.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are judged to be good because:

- there has been a general upward trend in the standards achieved by pupils over the past three years;
- the headteacher provides clear direction and leadership for the school and her aims and vision for improvement are shared by all staff;
- senior management meetings and staff meetings are clearly focused on school improvement;
- the school has an effective self-evaluation process, which leads to a school improvement plan that prioritises key issues for development; and
- the school improvement plan identifies clear intended outcomes that focus on raising standards and developing provision.

## Recommendations

In order to further improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in English at the end of key stage 2, with particular attention to improving the achievement of boys;
- R2 improve the attendance of pupils;
- R3 ensure that the recently developed processes deliver accurate assessment of pupil standards in all areas;
- R4 formalise the role of the senior management team to monitor and evaluate standards of learning and teaching; and
- R5 improve the governing body's analysis of performance data to increase the level of scrutiny and challenge it provides.

### **What happens next?**

The school will prepare an action plan detailing how it is going to address these recommendations.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make good or better than expected progress during their time at Mynachlog Nedd Junior School. Standards in lessons are good, and pupils generally achieve at a level that is appropriate to their age and ability.

Pupils with additional learning needs make consistently good progress in their learning and achieve their potential, and those who are entitled to free school meals generally achieve on a par with other pupils.

Most pupils achieve high standards of literacy skills. In lessons, and informally around the school, older pupils engage in articulate and extended conversation, using appropriate vocabulary. These standards in oracy are not reflected in the end of key stage assessment results. Progress in reading is very good, with the most able pupils achieving very high standards by the end of key stage 2. These pupils can use their reading skills well to research and enhance their own learning. Most pupils write well and accurately, and the most able pupils at the end of key stage 2 produce work of a very high standard.

Most pupils speak, read and write Welsh at an appropriate level and can talk confidently about familiar topics within the classroom and, to a lesser extent, in informal situations.

Over the last three years, there has been a general upward trend in the number of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) or above at the end of key stage 2, as indicated by the results of teacher assessment. This upward trend can be seen in English, mathematics and science. It is also evident in the core subject indicator, which takes account of pupil outcomes in all three subjects taken together.

Performance in the core subject indicator and in English is very close to the school's expected performance within its family group, although it falls below the average for that group. Performance in the core subject indicator also falls below the average for the whole of Wales, though performance in English is above the all-Wales average. Performance in both mathematics and science is above expectations for the school within the family. Taking the performance of the school in reading, writing and mathematics in combination, the school achieves significantly higher than expected results within the family.

When compared to the performance of schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, Mynachlog Nedd Junior school has improved from being in the lowest 25% of schools to being in the lower 50% over the past three years in relation to the core subject indicator, English, and mathematics. In science, the school has moved from being in the lowest 25% to being in the highest 25%. Within English, improvement is significant in reading and writing, but is not so marked in oracy.

Performance at above the expected level (level 5+) in mathematics and science is significantly higher than the average performance for both the family and for Wales as a whole. Performance in English at these levels is not as high, but still at the school's expected level within the family group. When comparing the Level 5+ results with those of similar schools, the school performs within the lower 50% of schools in English, and in the highest 25% in both mathematics and science.

Girls perform better than boys by a significant margin in English, specifically in oracy and writing, and in the core subject indicator.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils have a good awareness of the need to keep fit and healthy. They appreciate the benefits they receive from physical activities and many pupils make good use of the swings and climbing equipment at break times. Many pupils participate in the healthy initiatives within the school and parents agree that the school encourages a healthy lifestyle.

Most pupils feel safe at school and show care and concern for others in all aspects of school life. Attendance is currently about 93%, which is near the all-Wales average. However, attendance levels over the past four years have fallen within the lower 25% of those for similar schools.

Most pupils are generally well behaved, attentive and self-disciplined in lessons and on the school yard. They enjoy school, have a positive attitude to learning, and work well together. Most pupils take pride in their work, and understand how well they complete specific tasks.

Pupils are involved in making decisions as members of the eco committee. Through the school council, pupils have good opportunities to make choices that influence the life of the school. For example, they have made a worthwhile contribution to improving the school playground for the benefit of all pupils.

The school has good relations with the community. All pupils benefit from taking part in activities such as church services and concerts and are often involved in community and extra-curricular activities.

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

Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough and caters for the ability ranges within classes and across the whole school. There are strong links in medium and short term planning to the core skills of communication, numeracy and information and communication technology. Learning opportunities meet the needs of the pupils effectively and a wide variety of stimulating learning experiences positively promote their engagement. Over half of the pupils also choose to take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities, which extends their learning effectively.

The has been a whole school emphasis on developing learning skills. Pupils are systematically and routinely asked to assess these skills and the strategies they

could use for further improvements. This is a strong feature within the school. Classroom displays and whole school strategies effectively promote pupils' understanding of skills.

The school's curriculum provides useful opportunities for the pupils to learn about eco issues such as sustainability and citizenship. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss the recycling that takes place within school, and further strengthen pupils' understanding of global citizenship by links with international countries such as Norway, Croatia and France. These links have had a positive impact on the school's approach to learning and teaching.

The Welsh language is promoted effectively. Staff use Welsh incidentally and effectively in a wide range of activities. The daily Welsh oral sessions are a positive feature. The school has mapped clearly the Welsh dimension to the curriculum and provides a variety of effective opportunities for pupils to identify with their heritage.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teaching is a strength within the school, consistently throughout classes. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of all pupils. In nearly all lessons observed, teachers worked at a good pace and set various tasks at the appropriate level of challenge for groups of pupils. In the very few lessons where shortcomings were observed, teachers did not present learning objectives to pupils clearly enough and did not fully promote pupils' independent learning skills.

Teachers have very good relations with the pupils and there is mutual respect. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitude to learning and behaviour. A wide and effective range of teaching activities engages most pupils successfully. For example, the development of the use of the outdoor areas and the provision and use of information and communication technology are purposeful and consolidate learning across the curriculum.

Teachers work together as teams to plan lessons effectively. They identify subject specific skills in short term planning, and map medium term planning thoroughly. Teachers evaluate their lessons continuously and this helps them to plan relevant activities to meet the needs of the pupils.

Assessment data is used well by teachers to inform planning, track progress and set targets for improvement. However, the school does not accurately assess standards of pupils' oracy. The school has adopted new procedures, which have started to have a positive impact upon the process and accuracy of whole school assessment.

Assessment for learning is developing well and pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. An effective example is the sharing of levelled criteria for mathematics and English with older pupils. Pupils and teachers agree targets for writing and mathematics, which are regularly monitored and updated. Work with partner schools has effectively developed a shared understanding of pupil levels in some areas of the curriculum. However, assessment of oracy is inconsistent with the standards observed during lessons and in informal situations.

Reports to parents are sufficiently detailed and provide parents with good information on their children's progress.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

The emphasis on pupils' health and wellbeing is a good feature of the school. Clear systems are in place to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral and social skills develop well. There is a caring ethos within the school. The school uses a wide range of pupil rewards effectively to celebrate success, from stickers in home/ school planners to certificates for attendance. Outside agencies such as police and the road safety team are used to broaden an effective personal and social curriculum. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on negative behaviour during the annual anti-bullying week, and this helps pupils to understand of what sort of behaviour is acceptable within the school community.

Teachers encourage positive attitudes to health and fitness and this impacts well on pupils' participation in physical activities. The school allocates an appropriate period of time for physical education each week. Healthy lunchboxes have been a focus for work by the school council and this has had a good impact on parent awareness.

Staff analyse data well to identify pupils in need of extra support. They also prioritise limited resources successfully to provide interventions. Teachers carefully monitor the effect of these interventions, which contribute well to the raising of standards. Class teachers have a very strong knowledge of the needs of groups of pupils within their class. Staff are committed to providing the best opportunities for all pupils, ably supported by the co-ordinator of special needs. The school works well with other agencies within the local authority to support pupils.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

**Learning environment: Good**

The school has a very positive ethos, which recognises the importance of preparing pupils for life in a multicultural society. Teachers successfully promote equality and challenge stereotypes in all activities. There are effective systems in place for dealing with any instances of discrimination or oppressive behaviour.

The school has enough good quality learning resources that are appropriate to pupils' needs across all subject areas.

The school buildings and ground are well maintained. The pupils benefit from using the various activity zones, which include robust play structures and a large grassed area.

The school makes good use of the locality to support its curriculum, for example by creating a history trail through the village and by the use of abbey ruins to enhance work in history, geography, art and mathematics.

Displays of pupils work provide a stimulating environment that supports teaching, learning and pupils' self-esteem.

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

The headteacher provides clear direction and leadership for the school. She has a firm understanding of the needs of the school and shares her aims and vision for improvement with all staff.

All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They are clear about the current priorities for development in the school improvement plan, and senior management meetings and staff meetings have an appropriate focus on school improvement.

Performance management arrangements are sound and the targets set reflect the school's priorities for improvement.

The governing body supports the school well. There is an appropriate range of active committees, which have recently focussed on evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher shares the performance data with the governing body, but there is limited scrutiny and analysis. This restricts the level of challenge that the governing body provides as a critical friend.

The school meets national and local priorities well. It has focused appropriately on key priorities such as literacy and numeracy, and has worked effectively with other local schools to target these issues. The school has started to implement the principles of the School Effectiveness Framework through this strong collaboration.

Staff awareness of Foundation Phase has been developed through partnership work with their feeder infant school. This has led to improved transition for pupils.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school has an effective self-evaluation process, which includes teachers, support staff, governors, parents and pupils. The school improvement plan prioritises the key issues that emerge from the self-evaluation process as the main areas for development. It contains clear intended outcomes that focus on raising standards and improving the provision. This enables the school to track progress.

The senior management team makes appropriate use of performance data to monitor progress and plan for improvement. Other monitoring activities such as lesson observations and book scrutiny are more informal and less effective. All staff professional development links directly to the school improvement plan.

The teachers belong to a number of networks of professional practice within the school and more widely with teachers from other schools in the cluster. There is a culture of sharing good practice amongst the staff, with the effective use of teacher coaching. The focus of all of these professional networks links directly to the school improvement plan and its priorities.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school works well in partnership with other providers. Parents feel that they are kept well informed and they feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have an issues to discuss. The school arranges parent and carer open evenings, and curriculum open days, which help to share information about the school's work.

There are effective transition procedures with the infant school, which help children to settle quickly in to Year 3. This includes the swapping of teachers across the key stages and regular cross phase visits for pupils. The valuable transition arrangements with the local secondary school prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

There are several successful joint initiatives with other primary schools, such as the shared funding of a pupil counsellor. This shared resource has assisted transition to secondary school and improved standards of pupil wellbeing.

There are appropriate links with a range of agencies, such as the educational psychology service and the health service. The school's partnership with the local authority has supported work on raising standards in English and mathematics and the school's main priorities.

The school has, for some years, been involved in a successful Comenius project that has helped to establish international partnerships, leading to enriching experiences for both pupils and staff.

The school has good partnerships with the local community and uses members of the community well to enhance pupils' learning experiences.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its staff and resources well. There is effective deployment of teachers and the support staff across the school. Arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time are appropriate and there are good opportunities for teachers to plan together as a team.

The school manages its finances well. Spending decisions match the school's needs and the headteacher and the governing body's finance committee review these regularly.

In view of the good use the school makes of its funding and the good outcomes attained by most pupils, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

There has been a general upward trend in pupil performance at the end of key stage 2, as indicated by the results of teacher assessment over the last three years. This upward trend can be seen in English, mathematics and science. It is also evident in the core subject indicator, which takes account of pupil outcomes in all three subjects taken together.

In 2011, the pupil performance in the core subject indicator was below the family average, but slightly above the average results for Wales. This is slightly better than the expected performance for the school within its family. Girls outperformed boys by around 12 percentage points. This gap is significantly larger than the average gap for the family (four percentage points) and Wales (seven percentage points).

Performance at the expected level (level 4+) in English improved substantially in 2011, but is still below the average performance for the family and Wales. Again, this is slightly better than the expected performance within the family. Girls have consistently outperformed boys, with the gap being larger than both family and all-Wales averages. Performance at the higher than expected levels (level 5+) falls below the averages for both the family of schools and Wales, again with a significantly higher performance by girls. Performance in reading is well above the expected level within the family of schools, while the results for oracy and writing are close to expectations. When comparing the performance to that of similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals, the school has moved from being in the lower 50% of schools to the upper 50%.

The general upward trend is reflected in the performance in mathematics in 2011, with results being slightly below the family average but four percentage points above the Wales average. This is significantly better than the expected performance within the family. When comparing performance to that of similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals, the school has moved from being in the lowest 25% to being in the lower 50%, and is less than one percentage point from being in the higher 50% of schools. Performance at the higher than expected level is significantly above the averages for the family and Wales. At this level, when comparing the performance to that of similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals, the school has moved from being in the lower 50% of schools to the highest 25%.

Performance in science in 2011 was excellent, showing an increase of 23 percentage points over the last two years. Pupils performed better than both the family and Wales averages, and substantially exceeded the expected performance within the family. Performance at the higher levels was also high, and showed an increase of more than 35 percentage points from 2010. When comparing the performance to that of similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals, the school has moved from being in the lower 50% of schools to the highest 25%.

The school performs significantly better than expected within the family in reading, writing and mathematics taken in combination, with the results being higher than the average for Wales, but lower than the family average.

## Appendix 2

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Pupil Questionnaires**

One hundred and forty-nine questionnaires were submitted. Nearly all pupils know to whom they can turn if they are worried or upset, and believe that teachers and other adults at the school help them learn and make progress. They feel that they know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work difficult.

Most pupils feel safe at school and feel that they are doing well. They say that the school teaches them to keep healthy, and gives them plenty of opportunities to get regular exercise. Most pupils believe that there are enough books, computers and other equipment at school to help them do their work.

Many pupils believe that the school deals well with any bullying, and that other pupils generally behave well during play and lunchtimes and do not disrupt their learning in lessons. They also believe that homework helps them to understand and improve their work.

#### **Parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires, due to the small number of responses received (fewer than 10).

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Sarah Hurst	Team Inspector
Bernard Harrington	Lay Inspector
Janice Llewelyn	Peer Inspector
Mrs C Davies [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' (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