



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

**Central Infant School
Theodore Road
Port Talbot
SA13 1SP**

Date of inspection: November 2011

by

Dr P D Ellis

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

Central Infant School comprises three separate buildings, situated adjacent to the Memorial Park near the centre of Port Talbot. The main school was built in the 1930s. The current reception and nursery blocks were annexed as part of the school at a later date. The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and seven. The majority of those on roll come from the locality and the neighbouring communities of Goytre and Velindre; the area is described by the school as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Around 22% are entitled to receive free school meals, which is slightly below the local authority average, but above the national average.

There are currently 235 pupils on roll, including 69 who attend the nursery part-time. Full-time pupils are taught in five single age classes and one mixed Year 1/Year 2 class. The number on roll has increased since the last inspection. There are six full-time and three part-time teachers, including the headteacher.

The ability of pupils on entry varies, but is generally below average. Around 10% are registered as requiring special educational needs support, which is well below the local and national averages; none has a statement. Around 14% come from an ethnic minority background, mainly of Bangladeshi origin, the majority of whom receive support in English as an additional language. No pupils use Welsh as their first language. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The school was last inspected in October 2005. Since 2010 the school has been led by the headteacher of the receiving junior school under a shared headship arrangement. During the inspection one full-time teacher and one part-time teacher were on maternity leave.

The individual school budget per pupil for Central Infant School in 2011-12 is £3357 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Neath Port Talbot is £21718 and the minimum is £2648. Central Infant School is 47th out of the 71 primary schools in Neath Port Talbot in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's overall performance is good because:

- standards in the three core subjects in 2011 were above local authority and Wales averages and in the higher 50% overall in comparison to similar schools;
- nearly all pupils attain at least good standards in oracy, reading and writing and standards and provision in Welsh second language are excellent;
- all pupils demonstrate high levels of wellbeing; their behaviour is exemplary and their social and emotional development is a real strength of the school;
- the Foundation Phase is extremely well implemented through a stimulating and rich curriculum; and
- teaching is frequently excellent and never less than good.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- results in 2011 overall in English, mathematics and science at level 2 or above and at level 3 were better than the four previous years;
- the recently appointed headteacher has introduced many necessary initiatives to take the school forward;
- staff work very effectively together and distributed leadership is well developed;
- the process of self-evaluation is good and involves the gathering of first-hand evidence from all stakeholders; and
- staff have a developing awareness of the need to collaborate and share expertise with each other and practitioners from other schools and agencies.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 raise standards so that they are comparable to the majority of schools in the family;
- R2 improve boys' attainment in English;
- R3 further refine assessment procedures, particularly in relation to tracking, target setting and moderation; and
- R4 further develop self-evaluation procedures, particularly in relation to monitoring, data analysis and the gathering of first-hand evidence.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which 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

Nearly all pupils attain at least good standards in literacy. They communicate very confidently and articulately in a wide variety of contexts; their talk is purposeful and their questioning skills are good. They are very attentive listeners and enthusiastic readers; around 61% read above their chronological age. They produce well-presented extended writing in a range of genres, using accurate punctuation and spelling for their age. Handwriting and presentation are also good.

Standards in numeracy and information and communication technology skills are also at least good; pupils use hardware and software confidently and very effectively across the curriculum.

In 2011 results in English, mathematics and science at level 2 or above were better than the four previous years overall and above the local authority and Wales averages, but below the family of similar schools. The results in all three subjects have fluctuated over the last five years, so there is no clear trend in performance.

In 2011 results at level 3 in the core subjects were generally better than all four previous years and in mathematics and science they were better than the local authority average, but in all three subjects they were below the family averages. The trend in English and science is generally upwards.

The 2011 results place the school in the higher 50% for each of the core subjects in comparison to similar schools. This is the school's best performance over recent years.

Girls do better than boys overall at level 2 or above, especially in reading and writing, but boys attain better at level 3, especially in mathematics and science. Nearly all pupils make good progress through the school. No specific groups underachieve relative to their potential.

Standards in Welsh second language are excellent. All pupils progress very well from the nursery and by Year 2 all can speak several sentences and write in the present and past tense. Throughout the school all use incidental Welsh consistently in different contexts and have a good understanding of their Welsh heritage, commensurate with their age.

Wellbeing: Excellent

All pupils demonstrate high levels of wellbeing and feel very safe and happy in school. Their social and emotional development is excellent.

Nearly all pupils have a very positive attitude to healthy living and articulate their views confidently. They know the importance of being physically active.

All pupils enjoy learning and maintain concentration for extended periods. They are highly motivated and take pride in their work. They develop excellent skills of independence and autonomy. They co-operate very well and show care and concern for each other. Older ones become skilled in the processes of negotiating, debating and resolving conflict.

Pupils develop very good thinking and problem-solving skills and are beginning to understand how to improve their own learning.

All pupils achieve exemplary standards of behaviour. They are very well behaved in lessons and around the school and they know what is expected of them.

Attendance is above the local average and similar to the national average. It has risen steadily over the last four years with a very small dip in 2010/11. The school has the highest attendance for an infant school in the local authority. Unauthorised absence is low. A very few pupils are sometimes late.

The school council is involved in decision-making and all pupils are included in determining matters about their life and learning in school.

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

The Foundation Phase is exceptionally well implemented through a stimulating and rich curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Pupils in all classes are given many opportunities to become actively involved in their learning through a wide range of exciting and challenging first-hand experiences.

Teachers plan very effectively with support staff. Regular evaluations inform the next cycle of planning, providing flexibility and a creative response to pupils' needs and interests; this ensures that lessons build systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Teachers plan excellent continuous opportunities for pupils to develop linguistic, mathematical, creative, problem-solving and information and communication technology skills.

Whole-school topics and the organisation of group work ensure coherence, continuity and progression that meet the individual needs of all pupils extremely well. Intervention for targeted pupils in literacy is highly effective.

The school's provision for learning outside school and in extra-curricular activities, including links with the community, is good; these experiences broaden pupils' learning and promote their self-esteem and social skills very effectively.

Provision for the Welsh language is excellent. Teachers use it consistently and enthusiastically, thus encouraging pupils to speak it. There is a strong Welsh ethos.

Pupils clearly realise the need for recycling and are keen to keep their school tidy and free from litter. Through a number of excellent initiatives they develop an understanding of global citizenship and how people from different cultures live.

Teaching: Excellent

Teaching is frequently excellent and never less than good.

Where teaching is best, teachers implement the Foundation Phase extremely well in terms of active learning and matching tasks to pupils' interests, needs and stage of development. They enable pupils to manage their learning and to make their own decisions and choices, which develops their independence, confidence and autonomy exceptionally well.

All teachers prepare, structure and organise lessons very effectively. They make skilful and imaginative use of resources and provide well for all abilities. All have high expectations of pupils' achievements and behaviour.

All teachers and support staff know pupils very well. They use praise and encouragement very effectively to ensure all are motivated and engaged. They use effective open-ended and extended questioning to promote thinking and problem-solving skills.

The school uses appropriate forms of assessment that provide staff with evidence and benchmarks to measure pupils' progress. A sharper focus on standards is being developed.

Assessment for learning strategies are becoming embedded within all classes and make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' decision-making skills.

Teachers use data effectively for tracking and diagnostic purposes, but expertise in this aspect is an area for further development. Realistic and ambitious targets are set for literacy and mathematics and pupils not achieving their potential are specifically identified. Target setting at an individual pupil level has recently been introduced.

Personal booklets of each pupil's progress are kept, which exemplify excellent practice. Teachers also have produced very useful annotated portfolios of work in all seven areas of learning.

All work is marked thoroughly and most comments highlight how well pupils have achieved and what the next steps in their learning are.

End of year reports provide an overview of progress in all aspects of the curriculum, as well as suggesting areas for development. Parents are encouraged to reflect on the report and to respond in writing. Formal consultation meetings are held twice a year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has appropriate policies and arrangements in place to promote the health and wellbeing of pupils effectively. Various activities enable pupils to be physically active and to eat healthily and these are supplemented by personal and social education programmes, where responsible behaviour and respect for others are encouraged.

The 'Koala' nurture club for pupils requiring extra social and emotional support is an example of excellent practice that has a positive impact on the progress and standards of those who attend.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good and parents are very happy with the support and guidance given to their children.

Good health and safety arrangements are in place and stringent risk assessments are undertaken. However, there is currently only one fully trained first aider on the staff and other members of staff have not recently had their training updated.

An appropriate policy on behaviour management is in place. Procedures are positive and there have been no exclusions.

The school continues to be proactive in tackling any issues related to attendance and punctuality.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding. Security is good.

Pupils with specific learning difficulties are identified early and given well-planned and targeted support both in class and in withdrawal groups, due particularly to detailed individual education and play plans. There is an up-to-date register for more able and talented pupils.

The school works effectively with a wide range of outside agencies; this enables individuals and families to access any necessary support services quickly.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a strong inclusive ethos. It promotes equality of opportunity and a sense of fairness for all regardless of their gender, background or circumstances. It offers equal access to the curriculum, develops tolerant attitudes and ensures that all pupils and staff are free from harassment. Any incidents of this nature are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

The school places a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. It fully involves those from different ethnic backgrounds.

The school has a disability equality scheme and accessibility plan that ensure pupils with disabilities are not discriminated against and have equal opportunities across all areas of the curriculum and school life.

The accommodation is good and provides a stimulating learning environment. Classrooms are spacious and well used with a range of learning areas.

Pupils have access to good quality resources, which meet the demands of the Foundation Phase curriculum and which are well matched to learning needs. The library, in particular, is a very good resource, being well stocked and conducive to quiet study and reading.

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

The school's aims are clearly outlined in the prospectus. Leaders create a positive school ethos, in which pupils and staff feel valued and have high expectations.

The headteacher continues to lead the separate receiving junior school, which means he has a double workload. He has introduced many necessary initiatives to take the school forward. He oversees the strategic direction of the school very efficiently and has established very good relationships with staff, governors and parents.

The deputy headteacher is in charge when the headteacher is not present. She is very experienced and supportive.

Staff work very effectively together and distributed leadership is well developed. There is an experienced co-ordinator for each area of learning, supported by another teacher.

Performance management procedures have been reintroduced by the headteacher, so that statutory requirements are now met. All teaching staff have realistic and effective targets, aligned to the priorities of the school development plan. The school is also in the process of ensuring that support staff have similarly systematic targets under the direction of the bursar.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and takes full account of relevant legislation and guidance. A rolling programme of policy review is being put in place, although a number of documents are still in need of revision and there is no specific complaints procedure.

Governors have clearly defined roles and understand their responsibilities. They are kept regularly informed about the performance of the school. Most participate in relevant training events and visit the school frequently. They have area of learning interests and act effectively as critical friends.

The school is making good progress in introducing initiatives that meet local and national priorities.

Improving quality: Good

Various strategies are used to identify the school's strengths and areas for development, which involve the gathering of first-hand evidence from all stakeholders, including pupils. The outcome is that the headteacher and staff have a clear picture of the school's priorities.

The self-evaluation report is based on a thorough review of standards and provision. Performance data is accurately scrutinised and analysed.

The information gained from the self-evaluation process informs the school development plan, which gives the school clear direction. It is a manageable plan with well-considered strategies and priorities; its progress is reviewed regularly. Actions taken have led to measurable improvements.

Formal lesson monitoring has been reintroduced by the headteacher, who has visited every class to assess teaching and learning. Areas of learning leaders also have begun to monitor by observing lessons. All look at teachers' plans and pupils' work and listen to learners, as well as undertaking a termly audit; they produce a more detailed report when their area is a focus of the school development plan.

There is an established culture of professional reflection and staff have a developing awareness of the need to collaborate and share expertise with each other and practitioners from other schools and agencies. All teachers are involved in professional learning communities within the school and many participate in cluster and local authority initiatives.

The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection.

Partnership working: Good

The school has effective links with a range of partners, who make a successful contribution to improving pupil outcomes. A particular feature is the strengthening transition arrangements between the infant and junior schools, particularly because of the shared headship.

All parents and carers feel their children are helped to settle in well when they start school and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Parents and carers are well informed and confident about approaching the school with concerns. The prospectus and regular newsletters ensure they have access to useful information about school life.

The Friends Association is very effective in its social and fundraising role and various parents and carers help regularly in classes and with events. Family and community learning sessions are a strength of the school.

Nearly all pupils undertake home tasks on a regular basis and these build on what they learn in school.

Various members of the community support the curriculum well, but links with industry are relatively underdeveloped. There are beneficial partnerships with the local authority, the local comprehensive school and nearby colleges.

Moderation and standardisation procedures occur, but are relatively underdeveloped across the school and within the local cluster.

Resource management: Good

All staff have appropriate experience and expertise, which enables them to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum very effectively; adult:child ratios are above the recommended levels.

All staff are successfully deployed to make best use of their time, expertise and experience. Support staff work well alongside teachers and effective planning ensures there is good support for pupils, especially those with additional learning needs.

All staff are committed to developing their knowledge and skills through undertaking regular professional development, related to their performance management targets and school priorities. Whole-school training events and visits to other schools are regularly provided. Courses are thoroughly evaluated to ensure there is an appropriate impact on teaching and learning.

Effective use is made of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time, which is covered by an experienced teacher. Appropriate strategies and processes meet the requirements of the National Workload Agreement.

During the past few years resources have been improved through identified priorities and the use of targeted funding.

There has been a complete refurbishment and redecoration of the accommodation during the past few years. Displays are attractive and add significantly to the overall learning experience.

The outdoor areas for the nursery and reception classes are well laid out with pupils having very good access to climbing and other equipment. Additionally, very good use is made of the natural environment. The outdoor provision for Year 1 and Year 2, however, is limited.

The school makes good use of its allocated budget. Funds are allocated to targets identified in the school development plan and expenditure is regularly reviewed by the bursar, the headteacher and the governing body's finance committee.

The school has a large carry over from previous years, partly due to having a shared headteacher, but the underspend is being reduced through earmarked projects.

In light of the good pupil outcomes and the excellent quality of aspects of the provision, the school overall provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In 2011 results in English, mathematics and science at level 2 or above were better than most or all four previous years and above the LA and Wales averages, but were below the family of similar schools, although only four of these, including Central Infants, are separate infant schools. The results in all three subjects have fluctuated over the last five years, so there is no clear trend.

In 2011 results at level 3 in English were better than all four previous years, but remained below the family, LA and Wales averages; the trend is generally upwards. In mathematics the level 3 results in 2011 were better than most previous years and above the LA average, but below the family and Wales averages; there is no clear trend. In science the results were better than most previous years and similar to the family average and above the LA and Wales averages. The trend is upwards since 2009.

The 2011 results place the school in the higher 50% overall and for each of the core subjects in comparison to similar schools. This is the school's best performance over recent years.

Girls do better than boys overall at level 2 or above, especially in reading and writing, but boys attain better at level 3, especially in maths and science. Nearly all pupils make good progress through the school, especially in the nursery. No specific groups underachieve relative to their potential.

In 2011 in oracy, reading and writing results are below the family average, but above the local authority and Wales averages. In oracy, the trend is fairly static, in reading it is also static, but with a sharp rise in 2009, and in writing it has fluctuated but with a rise in 2011. Around 61% of pupils read above their chronological age, but less than half perform better than their age in spelling.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-six parents completed the questionnaire, eight of whom added written comments, most of which were positive.

All parents (100%) think that teaching is good, that homework builds well on what is learnt in school and that their child:

- likes school and makes good progress;
- is safe in school;
- was helped to settle in well;
- is helped to become more mature and responsible; and
- is well prepared for moving on to the next stage of his/her education.

All except one parent (96%):

- think pupils behave well in school;
- consider appropriate additional support is provided, if necessary; and
- understand the procedures for dealing with complaints.

All except two parents (92%):

- are satisfied with the school;
- consider they are kept well informed;
- think staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best and treat them fairly and with respect
- consider their child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise; and
- feel comfortable about approaching the school with any suggestions or problems.

All except three parents (88%):

- believe there is a good range of activities provided.

All except four parents (85%) (who had concerns about the shared headship):

- think the school is well run.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dr P David Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Branwen Llewelyn Jones	Team Inspector
Mrs Rhiannon Boardman	Lay Inspector
Mrs. Alison Matthias	Peer Inspector
Mr Robert Purchase	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (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