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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cilycwm Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Cilycwm
Llandovery
Carmarthenshire
SA20 0SR**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

Dorothy Morris

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Cilycwm Voluntary Controlled Primary School is situated in the small village of Cilycwm, near Llandovery in Carmarthenshire. It serves the village and the surrounding areas. The area is described as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Four per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure that is much lower than the county and national averages.

Currently, there are 22 pupils between three and 11 years of age on the school's register. They are admitted on a full-time basis at the beginning of the term of their fourth birthday. They are taught in two mixed-age classes. Pupil numbers have fallen over recent years.

Most pupils come from homes where English is the main language. Welsh is the main medium of teaching and learning at the school but all pupils are expected to be fluent in both English and Welsh by the end of key stage 2. There are currently no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds at the school. Three pupils (some 14%) are on the additional learning needs register, one of them holds a statement of special educational needs.

Following a period of uncertainty with regard to leadership and staffing, the current headteacher was appointed to her post in September 2011. In addition, there is one full-time and one part-time teacher. They are supported by two part time support staff. The headteacher is released to work with the local authority as a school support officer for two days a week.

The individual school budget per pupil for Cilycwm Voluntary Controlled Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £5909 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Carmarthenshire is £18947 and the minimum is £3114. Cilycwm Voluntary Controlled Primary School is the 10th highest of the 110 primary schools in Carmarthenshire in respect of the individual school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate.

The strengths include:

- most pupils make appropriate progress from their starting point during their period at the school;
- the range of interesting learning experiences offered within and outside the school;
- the standard of teaching which is good overall;
- pupils' behaviour which is very good.

Even so:

- overall, pupils' speaking and reading skills in Welsh are not secure enough;
- the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged;
- curriculum planning does not ensure consistent progression in the learning and does not develop pupils' skills progressively across the school; and
- some aspects of the physical environment are not of an appropriate standard.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate.

The strengths include:

- the effective leadership of the permanent headteacher that offers the school a sense of direction and purpose;
- the beneficial initiatives being introduced; and the
- successful collaboration with the governing body, parents and other partners.

Even so:

- the new procedures introduced have not embedded sufficiently to impact fully on the educational provision and standards of achievement;
- evaluation procedures do not pay sufficient attention to monitoring the provision and pupils' outcomes in the classroom; and
- the development plan identifies appropriate areas for attention but its implementation is at an early stage.

Recommendations

In order to develop further, the school needs to:

- R1 strengthen pupils' speaking and reading skills in Welsh, especially in key stage 2;
- R2 structure tasks further to ensure that the provision offers pupils appropriate challenge, and in particular, extends the more able pupils;
- R3 strengthen curriculum planning in order to develop pupils' learning skills progressively across the school;
- R4 develop assessment for learning strategies, especially the interactive feedback between teacher and pupil;
- R5 develop self-evaluation processes to include the evaluation of short term planning and of outcomes in the classroom;
- R6 work with the appropriate authorities to ensure the necessary improvements to the building and site.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that will show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

As only a small number of pupils are assessed at the end of both key stages, the data must be treated with care as the results of one child accounts for a high percentage of the cohort in each year and can affect the school's performance from one year to the next.

During their period at the school, most pupils make appropriate progress in their learning.

In teachers' assessments over a period of four years, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels when combined at the end of both key stages is higher than the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales in most years. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' results in Welsh separately are lower than the family and the local authority in two years and consistently lower than the averages for Wales.

When compared with the results of the family of schools, the achievements of more able pupils are uneven and consistently lower at the end of the Foundation Phase.

Apart from Welsh in key stage 2, the school's results in most years compare favourably with similar schools in relation to the percentage entitled to receive free school meals. As pupil numbers at the end of both key stages are low, it is not possible to make a valid comparison between the performance of girls and boys, and between the results of pupils entitled to free school meals and their peers. Pupils with additional learning needs make consistent progress in relation to their ability and previous attainment.

Over time, the assessments of pupils' speaking skills in Welsh at seven years of age compare favourably with comparators. Overall, the assessments in reading and writing are not as good. In key stage 2, pupils' speaking skills in English show good progress. Reading and writing assessments are uneven but show improvement. In Welsh, the assessments of pupils' speaking skills do not compare favourably with comparators and are uneven in reading and writing.

In the lessons observed, the majority of pupils listen well and can recall previous learning appropriately. Across the classes, a few pupils speak confidently in Welsh when discussing their work and express themselves clearly and accurately. In key stage 2 mainly, pupils' range of vocabulary, accuracy of expression and their confidence to discuss their work varies greatly. Overall, pupils do not contribute sufficiently at length when answering questions.

In both key stages, a few pupils read Welsh accurately and meaningfully, and they have a sound knowledge of characters and the story line. Overall, pupils do not read with sufficient fluency and understanding and their ability to discuss the contents of books is underdeveloped. Pupils' writing skills are developing appropriately. In the Foundation Phase, the majority of pupils can write for a range of purposes with increasing accuracy. They develop a more secure awareness of phonics and try hard to spell new words. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils make good progress in their ability to write for a specific purpose. They write comparatively accurately, varying the sentences and paragraphs appropriately. Even so, the range and

quantity of work varies and regular examples of extended writing in pupils' books are rare.

By the end of key stage 2, the English skills of the majority of pupils are developing well. Pupils respond positively to questions and express their ideas clearly. They read with appropriate fluency and accuracy. The majority write competently in a range of formats using different sentence structures and suitable vocabulary.

The majority of pupils work together constructively within their groups and respond appropriately to the tasks set. Across the school, pupils' ability to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning is insufficiently developed.

The majority of pupils use their numeracy and information and communications technology skills appropriately. Even so, they do not develop them progressively and in different contexts regularly enough. Pupils' ability to set personal targets for improvement is in its early stage of development. In key stage 2, pupils have started to develop suitable strategies to evaluate their own work.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils understand the features of healthy eating and its effect on the body. They also realise the importance of physical exercise and readily undertake different activities.

Children are happy at the school and enjoy their learning. They work constructively with others, respecting the views of other pupils. Their behaviour during lessons and play times is very good and they are courteous towards each other and towards adults.

The attendance levels of most pupils are good. In most years, the school's averages are in the highest 25% in comparison with similar schools. Punctuality is good.

Pupils' voices are given a fair hearing. The enthusiastic school and eco councils make a good contribution to school life and represent the voices of their peers conscientiously. Pupils have opportunities to shoulder responsibility, which they undertake with care. For example, two pupils produce the week's news for distribution to parents.

Pupils receive a range of purposeful experiences that develop their social and life skills effectively. They contribute successfully to a range of activities in the area and in the wider community.

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

The school offers its pupils a broad and interesting curriculum. Staff have flexibility within their planning to meet pupils' interests. The school provides a good range of sporting, musical and cultural activities through a variety of experiences and opportunities inside and outside the school, and away from the site.

Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their learning skills. Even so, there is insufficient structure in the planning to develop pupils' subject skills, as well as communication, numeracy and information and communications technology skills, progressively across the school. Initiatives to improve pupils'

reading skills are a good development but as yet these have not had the appropriate time to become fully established. The provision for developing writing skills is effective and there are a variety of opportunities in several areas. Even so, the provision is not as successful in ensuring the development of extended writing. The provision to develop numeracy and information and communications technology skills across the curriculum is more uneven. The thinking skills strategies are developing but are not yet fully embedded.

Both classes include pupils of mixed ages and ability. Pupils receive regular opportunities to work in groups of similar and mixed ability. Even so, the planning does not ensure that tasks always offer the appropriate challenge to meet pupils' current learning needs, especially those of the more able pupils. In the Foundation Phase, planning for activities is not always detailed enough to ensure consistent progress and balance across the areas of learning.

Regular emphasis is placed on using Welsh throughout the school. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig (Welsh Curriculum) has been integrated very effectively into many aspects of the curriculum and within school and extra-curricular activities. The school succeeds well in extending pupils' awareness of artists from Wales and of the history of their locality.

The school has effective provision for promoting pupils' understanding of sustainable development. The school and eco councils have a clear role in relation to recycling, saving energy and developing the garden. Pupils' understanding of global citizenship matters is promoted appropriately through the curriculum and through celebrating different cultural and international festivals.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the standard of teaching is good. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities that regularly fire pupils' interest. A very constructive working relationship exists between the adults and pupils which promotes learning.

In most of the sessions where the teaching is effective, lessons are planned in detail, objectives are shared with the pupils and revisited during the closing sessions. There is good use of resources and purposeful opportunities for pupils to work in discussion pairs and in small groups. Penetrating questions and clear explanations are regular features. Assistants make an effective contribution to the quality of learning.

Where the teaching is less effective, planning is not detailed enough to ensure that tasks challenge the pupils and enhance their learning, especially the more able pupils. At times, there is overuse of worksheets and the pace of lessons is too slow to ensure constant learning.

The school is in the process of restructuring its systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The new system includes suitable procedures such as a computerised tracking system, a new marking policy and a more detailed system for gathering and levelling pupils' work in individual files.

Pupils' work is marked regularly and in the best examples, constructive comments are offered that help pupils improve their own performance. At times, comments are not expressed clearly enough or the feedback is too detailed to be of practical help.

The work of developing assessment for learning strategies has begun but the process has not yet been embedded consistently throughout the school. In key stage 2, there is good use of some strategies. The role of the pupil in target setting continues to develop across the school.

Reports to parents include appropriate comments and identify the way forward. There are suitable arrangements for standardising and moderating teachers' assessments.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a happy community where everyone feels they are valued. The benefits of healthy living are promoted effectively through the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Staff encourage each pupil to become actively involved in school life.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding. Each member of staff has received training and are aware of their responsibilities.

Provision for personal and social education is good, and the school promotes pupils' moral and cultural development effectively. Particular attention is paid to pupils' personal, emotional and educational needs and there is a sound working relationship with external agencies and specialist services. Comprehensive information is prepared for the school's partners.

There are effective procedures for identifying pupils with additional learning needs. Suitable support is provided which is co-ordinated conscientiously. The individual educational plans are reviewed regularly and parents are involved in the process. There is good use of the support of the additional learning needs teacher and the learning assistants.

Learning environment: Adequate

The school's caring and inclusive ethos promotes equal opportunities and appreciates diversity. The policy and schemes for racial equality are in place and satisfy statutory requirements. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils, and sound systems ensure very good behaviour throughout the school.

The school is located in an old building which is lacking in basic facilities. Some aspects are of an inappropriate standard. Even so, the school makes the best possible use of the building and site. The standard of decoration is defective in places but the colourful displays create an attractive environment for pupils. There are sufficient resources which are used appropriately to support the teaching and learning. The site is large and there is creative use of the garden. The school makes good use of sporting facilities in the area and the village playing field to overcome the obvious shortcomings in the provision on the site.

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

The headteacher's leadership has a positive effect on the school's development. She has a clear vision for the school and in a short time has successfully conveyed that vision to parents, governors and staff. Under her leadership, the staff are developing as an unit and are increasingly working together as a team.

Many good procedures have been implemented recently to ensure better processes for raising standards and promoting progress throughout the school. There is a clear focus on extending and enriching the curriculum and on developing teaching methods. However, all the processes are not clear enough for all members of staff. They have not been sufficiently established either to have an impact on pupils' achievement in all areas.

The governing body is supportive of the school's work and is aware of its responsibilities. Members have a good knowledge of the day to day running of the school and use the school's data analysis sensibly to discuss the school's performance. Many of the governors visit the school regularly and this contributes appropriately to their understanding of the needs and challenges facing the school.

The school pays due attention to national priorities linked to the School Effectiveness Framework through working with local schools. The school implements the Foundation Phase, and literacy has been targeted in order to raise standards further.

Improving quality: Adequate

Self-evaluation systems are developing appropriately. Increasing use is made of suitable evidence sources. Even so, there is insufficient focus on monitoring the quality of the curricular provision and progress in classes to contribute to the school's quality assurance systems. Also, the formal monitoring processes have not been fully established which means that they do not lead to setting development targets that focus sufficiently on identifying and improving standards. This also means that although the school's self-evaluation report is detailed it is not evaluative enough and does not focus sufficiently on outcomes that lead to an improvement in standards and quality.

There is an appropriate link between the current development plan and the latest self-evaluation report. The school development plan identifies suitable development targets for the school, but the success criteria overall do not focus specifically enough on pupils' outcomes.

Currently, governors do not receive sufficient information that comes from the school's self-evaluation systems to enable them to take a more active role in drawing up the school development plan and setting the strategic direction for the school.

Good systems are in place for the professional development of staff. Many of them take advantage of opportunities to attend courses that equip them new skills to develop teaching and learning approaches.

There are useful examples of the school beginning to become involved in professional learning communities, such as an internal initiative that shows a commitment towards improving pupils' extended writing skills.

Partnership working: Good

The school has fostered effective strategic partnerships that extend the provision and are also of benefit to pupils' education, wellbeing and development.

The partnership with parents is considered to be all important and there is positive collaboration. The fund raising efforts of the Friends of the School ensure additional resources that enrich pupils' learning experiences. Links with the community are good, and pupils benefit from a range of external visits and the contribution of visitors

to the school. There is regular collaboration for arranging activities, such as concerts and services, in the community.

There are effective curricular links and transfer arrangements with the secondary school. The school also collaborates well with other primary schools in the area on a range of activities. The close link with one school and the purposeful arrangements for pupils to work together and for teachers to share subject expertise is a constructive feature.

Resource management: Adequate

The headteacher and governors make effective use of money in order to ensure an appropriate level of staff that is equipped to deliver the curriculum. The school's ancillary staff are an effective part of the team and are having a positive influence on the teaching and learning. Teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is used appropriately to plan work and monitor pupils' progress. The school provides appropriate training internally and with the support of the local authority and relevant training agencies.

There are sufficient resources to meet the requirements of pupils' learning experiences. The quality of the building and site do not always ensure an appropriate environment.

The school's financial decisions are linked to the priorities for improvement and pupils' wellbeing. The school's budget is monitored regularly. Although there have been recent improvements in aspects of provision, strategic planning has not had time to become established and have sufficient impact on pupils' standards and curricular planning. The school offers adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

As only a small number of pupils are assessed at the end of both key stages, data must be treated carefully as the results for one child accounts for a high percentage of the cohort in each year and can affect the school's performance from one year to the next.

During their period at the school, most pupils make appropriate progress in their learning.

Over a period of four years, the percentage of seven year old pupils that attain the expected level (level 2) in Welsh, mathematics and science combined is higher than that for the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales in three of the last four years. The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 in Welsh and mathematics separately is also higher than comparators in three of the four years. In science, they are consistently higher. No pupil has achieved the higher level (level 3) in any subject during the last four years. When compared with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the schools combined results place it amongst the highest 25% in Wales in three of the last four years.

Over a period of four years, the percentage of 11 year old pupils that achieve the expected level (level 4) in Welsh or English, mathematics and science combined is higher than that for the family of similar schools, the local authority and Wales in two of the last four years. In one year, there were no 11 year old pupils. The percentage of pupils that achieve level 4 in English and mathematics separately is also higher than comparators in two of the three years. In science, they are consistently higher. Pupils' results in Welsh are lower than the family and the local authority in two years and consistently lower than the averages for Wales.

The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5) has been higher than the family in English, mathematics and science during the last two years. In Welsh, the percentage is higher than the family in two out of the last three years but lower than the local authority averages and those for Wales. When compared with schools having a similar percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the school's combined results place the school in the higher quarters in Wales in two of the last three years.

As the number of pupils at the end of both key stages is small, it is not possible to make valid comparisons on the performance of boys and girls and the results of pupils who receive free school meals with their peers. Pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress in relation to their ability and previous attainment.

Over time, assessment results in pupils' Welsh speaking skills at seven years of age compare favourably overall with the family, local authority and Wales averages but results in reading are very uneven. Results for writing are consistently lower but show an improvement in 2011. In key stage 2, pupils' results in speaking English compares favourably with comparators. Results in reading and writing are uneven but show improvement. In Welsh, speaking skills are lower than all the comparators. In reading and writing, they are uneven but lower than the comparators in two of the last three years.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There are no comments on the parents' questionnaires as only a small number of responses were received.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Fifteen pupils completed the questionnaire. All pupils state that they feel safe at the school and know who to speak to if they are worried about anything. Almost all say that the school deals with bullying well. All state that they are taught to be healthy, and that there are many opportunities for them to undertake regular physical exercise. Many are of the opinion that they are doing well in school and all say that teachers help them to learn and to make progress. All are of the opinion that homework helps them to understand and improve their school work, and that they have plenty of books and equipment to undertake their work. Many believe that other pupils behave well during play time and the lunch break. All are of the opinion that pupils behave well during lessons.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Alun Williams	Peer Inspector
Carol Dyer	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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

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

Core subject indicator in all key stages

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

All-Wales Core Data sets

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