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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Garnteg Primary School
Hillcrest
Garndiffaith
Pontypool
NP4 7SJ

Date of inspection: September 2010

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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

Garnteg Primary School is situated in the small town of Garndiffaith, near Pontypool. The school serves some private, but mostly rented homes. The school admits children to the nursery at the age of three. The entry of children into the nursery is controlled and administered by Torfaen County Borough Council.

The school opened in new accommodation in 1995 following closure of two small, local schools, and provides for children from Garndiffaith, Varteg and Talywain. The school building and teaching areas are surrounded by generous playground yards and fields, including a nature and wetland area, an outside climbing wall and abseiling facility.

There are 180 full time pupils on roll and a further 17 children attend the nursery. The school is organised into seven classes. These include one part time nursery class that meets in the morning, three single aged classes in the Foundation Phase and Year 2, and three split classes in key stage 2. The classes are taught by seven full time teachers and ten learning support assistants.

The school describes the area it serves as being mainly socially and economically deprived. Approximately 31% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is significantly higher than the local and national averages and has increased in the three year school trends. Currently, there are five pupils who are being 'looked after' by the local authority (LA).

English is the predominant language for all pupils. There are currently no pupils receiving support for English as an additional language and no pupils who use Welsh as a first language.

Base line indications show that attainment on entry to the school is generally below the national average with pupils requiring input for speech and language. Approximately 22% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) and two pupils receive a statement of ALN. One pupil received a fixed-term exclusion in the last year.

Since the last inspection in 2004 there have been significant changes to the management structure and senior leadership of the school. The current senior leadership team is comprised of three new members that were not in their posts at the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post since 22 February 2010.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Garnteg Primary School is £3,539 which compares with a maximum of £8,471 and a minimum of £2,792 for primary schools in Torfaen. The school has the 12th highest budget per pupil out of the 32 primary schools in Torfaen.

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall judgement for the school is adequate. The school has many strengths including:

- most children make at least appropriate progress by the end of key stage 2;
- the school provides high-quality care, support and guidance for the pupils which results in high standards of wellbeing; and
- the quality of partnerships with the community and local employers is very effective.

However, the quality of teaching is not good enough to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress.

Prospects for improvement

The judgement on prospects for improvement is good because in a short period:

- leaders and managers have successfully developed procedures for effective self-evaluation;
- the headteacher has provided clear leadership and direction and sense of purpose to the school;
- leaders and managers have improved the ethos, the quality of behaviour and learning environment; and
- leaders and managers have motivated staff so that they all demonstrate an enthusiastic commitment to the process of school improvement.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching;
- R2 improve the consistency and accuracy of moderation at key stage 1;
- R3 ensure that time for teaching and learning in both key stages meets the recommendations of the Welsh Assembly Government; and
- R4 continue to develop self-evaluation and planning for improvement especially in the effective use of success criteria.

What happens next?

Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the local authority.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many pupils make progress, attain well and achieve appropriately high standards whilst in Garnteg Primary School.

Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is sound. In 2010, when compared to similar schools, the school was placed in the upper 50% of similar schools for the Core Subject Indicator (CSI), the expected level in all three core subjects. However, within the core subjects, pupils attained least well in English as the school was in the lower 50% of similar schools. Compared to schools that face similar challenges, pupils achieving the expected level 2 or better perform around the average for the CSI, above average in mathematics and science but below the average in English. Pupils have high standards of speaking but their reading and writing are less well developed.

In key stage 1, when comparing the percentage of pupils above the expected level 2, the school is placed as the best in its family for mathematics, science and English.

Many pupils attain very well in their end of key stage 2 assessments. In 2010 the school was in the top 25% of similar schools for the CSI. For pupils achieving the expected level 4 the school compares very well to its family of schools especially in science where it is the best. Although the number of pupils who achieved the higher level 5 is not quite as good, the schools still compares well.

When compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals (FSM) attainment in both key stages has improved since 2007 although there was a slight dip in 2010 in key stage 1.

For pupils at the expected level 2+ in key stage 1, girls do better than boys by around five percentage points which is slightly narrower than the average in Wales and about the average for the family of schools. The school is making progress in reducing this gap. For pupils at the expected level 4, boys performed better than girls in end of key stage 2 assessments in 2010. However, for pupils at the higher level 3 in key stage 1 and the higher level 5 in key stage 2, girls do far better than boys making the gap much wider than the average for the family of schools.

Pupils with ALN do well over their time in the school making good progress in relation to their starting points.

Many pupils enter the school with skills below that expected of them especially in speaking and listening. However, by the end of key stage 1 they improve significantly to reach at least the appropriate levels. In the nursery class, children make very good progress, settling quickly into school routines and becoming increasingly confident learners. Most show real interest in books.

Progress is very good at the end of key stage 2 so that by the time pupils move to secondary education many recall previous learning well and use and apply their skills effectively in a range of situations. This equips pupils for the next stage of their learning.

Many pupils read and write well, especially in key stage 2. They write at length across a range of genres, use a variety of styles effectively, punctuate their work well, and use descriptive language to enhance their writing. This enables them to work well across the whole of the curriculum and contributes to their good levels of attainment.

Pupils' work across a range of subjects shows that they are using numeracy effectively to solve practical everyday problems.

Pupils information and communications technology (ICT) skills are very good overall. A few nursery children confidently take and delete photographs on a digital camera. Many pupils demonstrate a strong knowledge of a range of appropriate software and hardware. Older pupils involved in running the 'recording suite' show excellent ICT skills when creating video presentations. They use cameras, sound and lighting controls, recording and editing procedures and computers to a very high level across a range of subjects and contexts. This innovative project helps to develop a range of skills for all pupils such as self-confidence in public speaking, teamwork, problem-solving and self-esteem.

Throughout the school almost all pupils work together well in teams or groups. The youngest pupils show good co-operation as they bake buns together, complete 'floor jigsaws' and build dens outdoors. Older pupils work together effectively on solving mathematical problems, using the climbing wall, or as teams running the 'recording studio'.

End of key stage 2 data for Welsh second language shows that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 4 is well above average for the local authority and Wales. Girls perform better than boys by 27 percentage points.

Nearly all pupils use incidental Welsh unprompted. More able learners can use the present, past and imperfect tenses with varying degrees of confidence. However, learners' oral skills do not always match the standard of their written work.

Wellbeing: Good

The standard of pupils' wellbeing is generally a strong feature of the school.

Most pupils are enthusiastic and attentive learners. They apply themselves well in lessons and adopt a positive approach to learning activities. Almost all pupils behave very well showing increasingly mature attitudes as they move through the school. They are courteous and friendly. Nearly all pupils say that they feel safe in school.

Through their choice of meals and participation in a range of physical activities, many pupils demonstrate a clear appreciation of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Older pupils have an increasingly informed and secure understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise. They recognise the harmful effects of particular substances on the body.

Most pupils increasingly take responsibility for their learning by setting helpful targets to improve their work. Through a range of partnerships, several pupils have been involved in local projects that have helped develop their social and business skills.

Pupils' attendance is currently around two percentage points below all Wales averages. Most pupils are punctual.

The school council plays a very active part in the life of the school. It has successfully promoted initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles and improve the school environment. It has also contributed to the development of particular school policies and helped organise several fundraising activities and sponsored events. The school council provides the governing body with a useful short report on its work each half term.

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

Key stage 1 staff have successfully adopted new planning structures for the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, the school provides a broad range of suitable learning experiences that effectively support and engage pupils. Plans identify skills to be taught and most lessons provide suitable opportunity for pupils' development. However, plans do not identify opportunities to build on pupils' skills.

Withdrawal groups to support pupils with literacy, numeracy and personal and social needs contribute significantly to developing pupil confidence resulting in improvement in pupils' attainment.

The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular activities and visits that enrich pupils' experiences, and there is a high take-up by them. These complement the school curriculum well and promote pupils' self esteem and teamwork effectively.

There is a strong Welsh ethos in the school and many appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to consolidate their Welsh language skills informally and make suitable progress. Many schemes of work also make appropriate references to Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig such as the work on 'The Big Pit', Laura Ashley, Llancaiach Fawr, and local events of historical significance which have added to pupils' understanding of aspects of Welsh history.

The school succeeds in promoting education for sustainable development and global citizenship. Displays around the school draw attention to recycling, natural world and other cultures. The outside environment is used to good effect, with vegetable patches, a wetland area, bird boxes, nature paths and wild areas.

The school does not meet the recommendations from the Welsh Assembly Government on the amount of time required for teaching and learning. Lessons do not always start punctually, further reducing the time available for teaching and learning.

Teaching: Adequate

Overall, the quality of teaching varies too much. Whilst the majority of teaching is good, much of this is in the nursery class and at the end of KS2. In a minority of classes, teachers do not provide opportunities for all pupils to build effectively on their previous learning.

Where there are shortcomings, pupils are insufficiently challenged, staff expect too little of them and classroom activities do not consistently meet pupils' needs. Teachers' knowledge of the Foundation Phase is not developed well and as a result there is not enough balance between child-led and teacher directed activities. This means that support staff are not always used effectively to assist groups of pupils in their learning.

A majority of staff assess pupils' work well on a day-to-day basis providing them with clear oral or written feedback that explains how they are doing and how make further progress. Pupils' progress is effectively tracked across the school and this helps to inform planning in many classes.

Assessment procedures at the end of key stage 2 are effective. Staff work well with other local schools to accurately moderate pupils' work. End of key stage 1 assessments are not as well established leading to some pupils being awarded an incorrect higher level 3 when level 2 would be a more appropriate best-fit judgement.

Parents and carers are well-informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

A strength of the school is its inclusive philosophy and the way it values the achievements of all pupils. It is a well-ordered and caring community. Adults and pupils show respect to each other and this provides a very good basis for effective teaching and learning.

Effective arrangements exist to support pupils' health and wellbeing including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include celebration assemblies, the use of positive praise and a variety of activities such as the nurture group to promote self-esteem and confidence. There is an anti-bullying policy and staff successfully promote good behaviour. Most pupils and their parents or carers feel able to approach staff for advice and guidance when required.

Provision for pupils with ALN is very good. Staff diagnose learning difficulties early and provide pupils with appropriate and timely support. There are good links with specialist external agencies. Individual education plans (IEPs) are regularly evaluated and updated and parents are kept well-informed and fully involved.

The school is taking appropriate steps to improve pupils' attendance.

Two issues relating to the wellbeing of pupils were brought to the attention of the headteacher and the governing body. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding and fully meets safeguarding regulations.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community. The curriculum is fully accessible to all, regardless of gender, race or background.

All pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. There is a strong focus on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. Staff give particular emphasis to building pupils' self-esteem, recognising achievement and raising aspirations.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. Teaching and support staff are suitably qualified and are generally deployed effectively. The school buildings and grounds are well-maintained, in good decorative order and appropriate for the number of pupils on role.

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

Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has prioritised areas for improvement. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has introduced appropriate processes and systems for the efficient organisation and management of school life, some of which are already having a positive impact. There is a comprehensive meeting structure that is well-focused on school priorities.

The SLT has established a clear vision for the school which everyone values and understands. Effective use of performance management has successfully resulted in all staff entering very enthusiastically into the process of school improvement. All staff are involved in improvement planning and share and develop their own and others' knowledge. This is beginning to bring about change and is a significant development for the school. There is improving analysis of data to set improvement targets.

The Governing Body is particularly effective as a critical friend. It is well-informed and provides rigorous challenge to the headteacher. Policies and initiatives, including those that meet local and national priorities, are implemented consistently.

Improving quality: Adequate

Leaders and managers have successfully developed procedures that enable effective self-evaluation. These have provided a clear direction and sense of purpose, and have improved the ethos, behaviour and the learning environment, but as yet show limited impact on standards or quality of teaching.

The school improvement plan is a clear document that identifies appropriate targets and actions to secure further school improvement. The procedures include a wide range of evaluation tools including parent and pupil surveys. However, the success criteria and pupil attainment targets are not specific enough to enable it to have real effect. The performance management process ensures that all staff have appropriate development targets and opportunities linked to their professional

development and school improvement. The SMT have developed useful links with other schools to review professional practice.

Partnership working: Good

The school has very effective links with a wide range partners, including Brynteg Nursery, that make a strong contribution to improving learning resources and outcomes for learners. Standards in art and ICT have risen through shared planning and resourcing with the High School. Effective partnerships improve the quality of assessment at key stage 2. The school is an active partner in securing improvement through good links with the local authority. Community links are of a very high quality. A range of visitors contribute to activities in the school and the school takes part in a wide range of community ventures. Several local schools make good use of Garnteg's climbing wall facility.

Through a successful bid for funding from the Welsh Assembly Government's Heads of the Valley, the school has established a very high-quality project recording studio. This supports outstanding community partnerships that include Melin Homes, Bron Afon, the Garnsychan partnership and BRFM (Bristol Radio). The network of partnerships between local schools has provided pupils with particularly valuable first-hand experiences of a technologically enriched curriculum.

Resource management: Good

Leaders manage resources well and staff are suitably deployed to support learning outcomes. Staff training and development programmes are planned to ensure that they benefit pupil learning. The successful partnership working with other schools and agencies has enabled the school to access resources it would not be able to provide alone.

The school makes spending decisions on the basis of its priorities for improvement and impact on pupil outcomes. Overall, learning outcomes for pupils are good. The school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Very few parents completed the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed positive views about the school. Many are pleased with the school and say their children like being there and that they feel their children are safe at school. Most parents think the school is well-run and find staff approachable if they have any questions or concerns. Many feel they are kept well-informed about their children's progress. A very few parents feel pupils do not behave well but most do not share this view. A few parents were unsure of the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Most pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Almost all feel safe in school and believe that the school deals well with any bullying. Nearly all think that they are well-supported in school especially having someone to talk to if they are worried or upset. Almost all feel they are doing well at school, believe there are enough resources to enable them to learn well and that homework is of value to them. There is widespread agreement that the school helps pupils to live healthy lifestyles.

A minority of pupils feel that other pupils do not always behave well in class or in the play and lunch intervals.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Richard Hawkley HMI	Reporting Inspector
John Thomas HMI	Team Inspector
Sue Halliwell HMI	Team Inspector
Mererid Wyn Williams HMI	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Sue Davies	Peer Inspector
Sue Roche	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11