



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

**Darrenlas Primary School
Kingcraft Street
Darrenlas
Mountain Ash
RCT
CF45 3LT**

Date of inspection: November 2013

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:

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

Darrenlas Primary school is in the Darrenlas district of Mountain Ash in the Cynon valley, north of Cardiff. The unitary authority is Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. Most pupils live in the immediate locality. In the past four years, the number of pupils on roll has increased significantly. There are now 219 pupils on roll, including 26 pupils who attend the full-time nursery. Pupils are taught in eight classes, most of which contain pupils from a single year group.

Nearly all pupils are white British and nearly all come from English-speaking homes. Approximately 30% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is slightly above the average for the local authority and well above the average for Wales. The school has identified 19% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is below the average for the local authority and slightly below the average for primary schools across Wales.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in 2012. The school was last inspected in 2007.

The individual school budget per pupil for Darrenlas Primary School in 2013-2014 means that the budget is £3,028 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £7,033 and the minimum is £2,659. Darrenlas Primary School is 91st out of the 110 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is adequate because:

- the majority of pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points;
- nearly all pupils' behaviour and attitude to school are very good;
- all pupils are happy in school and develop self-confidence during their time in school;
- many pupils' standards in Welsh are good;
- most teaching is good; and
- provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good.

However:

- pupils' attainment in Foundation Phase assessments is relatively weak when compared with that in similar schools in recent years;
- more able pupils do not achieve in mathematics as well as they could; and
- pupils' understanding of sustainability and global citizenship is not well developed.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- senior leaders provide clear direction and effective leadership;
- all staff work well as a team;
- in the short time since her appointment, the headteacher's initiatives have had a significant, positive impact on improved outcomes for pupils;
- self-evaluation procedures are wide ranging and accurate; and
- improvement plans focus clearly on improving pupils' standards.

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards in numeracy across the school
- R2 Improve pupils' attendance
- R3 Increase pupils' awareness of sustainability and global citizenship
- R4 Increase the involvement of pupils in assessing their own progress and deciding their own next steps for improvement
- R5 Strengthen the governing body's role as a critical friend in challenging the school to improve

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

The majority of pupils enter the school with skill levels that are above those expected of pupils of a similar age. Many pupils make appropriate progress by the end of Year 6.

Throughout the school, most pupils have very good listening skills. As they move through the school, most children develop their oracy skills well. By the end of key stage 2, they speak clearly and confidently to each other and to adults.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils acquire an increasingly sure knowledge of the relationships between letters and sounds and learn to use their knowledge of phonics to build words when reading aloud. Through the Foundation Phase, they read their own work and their reading books well. In the nursery class, pupils' mark-making skills develop appropriately. As they progress through the Foundation Phase, most pupils' writing skills develop well. By Year 2, the majority write legibly, with consistent letter formation and neat spacing. When writing stories, the majority structure their writing well and use an interesting range of adjectives. The more able pupils write in sentences that begin with a capital letter and end in a full stop.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase develop numeracy skills well. Most use mathematical language correctly, and add and subtract single digit numbers accurately. They explain counting on and name simple shapes correctly.

Most pupils in key stage 2 develop reading competence well. By Year 6, many pupils read clearly and with good expression. Many develop the higher-order skills of skimming and scanning for information well. About half use inference and thinking skills appropriately to increase their understanding of the texts they read. Most pupils develop clear handwriting and present the work in their English books neatly. They give due consideration to the purpose of their writing and their intended audience. Most write in paragraphs, with accurate spelling and punctuation, and a majority in Year 6 write at length, with good awareness of the structure of their work. Overall, however, the majority of pupils do not apply their literacy skills as well outside their English lessons.

Most pupils in key stage 2 make appropriate progress in mathematics. In Year 6 they read and write numbers to a million well. By Year 6, their computation skills enable them to work accurately in solving problems that involve money and metric measures. Most use their numeracy skills well when required in other curriculum areas, such as when they use graphs and tables to present information, or to compare currencies to decide which holiday destination offers best value. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy skills in their topic work.

Pupils in the Foundation Phase are making good progress and gaining confidence in their ability to speak, read and write in Welsh. By the end of key stage 2, pupils have made good progress in speaking and reading in Welsh, but their writing skills are less well developed. Few pupils make sufficient use of their Welsh language skills outside of formal classroom lessons.

In 2013, pupil outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase were broadly similar to those of most schools in its family (a group of schools that face similar challenges) in language, literacy and communication and in personal and social skills. In mathematical development, pupils' outcomes were below those in other schools in the family and across Wales as a whole. In 2012 and 2013, when compared with similar schools (those that have a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals), pupils' attainment in all areas of learning placed the school in the lower 50%.

Over the past four years, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has fluctuated widely. In 2010 and 2011, attainment at the expected level (level 4) in English, mathematics and the core subject indicator placed the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. In 2012 and 2013, attainment in English and the core subject indicator placed the school in the upper 50%, while in mathematics and science, attainment placed the school in the lower 50%. In 2013, at the higher than expected level (level 5), the performance of pupils placed the school in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools. In 2013, pupil outcomes at level 5 were the lowest in the family in English and science.

In the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2, girls achieve more highly than boys in most subjects and areas of learning. Overall, pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve more highly than others. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in line with their ability.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Pupils' behaviour is very good within and outside of lessons. They enjoy being in school and show positive attitudes to learning. Many have good independence skills and collaborate well with others, taking turns and sharing appropriately. Pupils relate well to each other and to staff. They demonstrate good levels of care, concern and respect. For example, play buddies support playtime activities for younger children successfully.

The effective school council represents the views of pupils actively. Members have suggested improvements and helped to make decisions for the school. For example, they run the tuck shop, which successfully promotes pupils' healthy eating and their entrepreneurial skills. The newly-formed eco committee has not had enough time to make much impact at this stage.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and taking part in physical activities. Attendance at after-school clubs is good.

Over the past four years, attendance has been below the average for similar schools. Despite a significant improvement in 2012, pupils' attendance levels placed the school in the lower 50% when compared with similar schools.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the National Curriculum. It builds systematically from class to class on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers plan collaboratively to ensure that they provide interesting lessons that engage pupils of all abilities. Teachers ensure that their lessons enable pupils to develop their skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately across a range of subject areas. For example, pupils in Year 4 write detailed descriptions of their visit to Cardiff Castle, and pupils in Year 6 write persuasively to encourage people to visit Snowdonia. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to practise their numeracy skills outside their mathematics lessons. Good arrangements exist by which pupils who are less able receive appropriate support, both in classes and in withdrawal groups.

Visits to places in the locality and further field, and a broad range of after-school clubs support and enhance pupils' experience of cultural and sporting activities successfully. Arrangements for the teaching of religious education are appropriate.

Across the school, the provision to help pupils to develop their skills in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh is good. Staff encourage pupils to use Welsh outside Welsh lessons, but pupils are not confident in doing so. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales.

Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of sustainability and global citizenship are limited.

Teaching: Good

Teachers establish and maintain a purposeful, working ethos in classes. In the many lessons where teaching is most effective, teachers provide stimulating tasks that engage pupils' interest well. They provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to work individually and to collaborate in pairs and small groups. They challenge pupils regularly to complete tasks in a set period of time and this ensures that lessons move forward at a suitable pace. In most classes, teachers use questioning skilfully to promote pupils' thinking. They adapt lessons appropriately, and staff are effective in supporting pupils with additional needs.

The school makes good use of a range of measures to assess and monitor pupils' progress. Staff use data well to help plan appropriate activities that meet the needs of most pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and fairly, praising good work and suggesting ways to improve. Most teachers give timely and useful feedback during lessons. Although nearly all teachers use a variety of assessment for learning techniques in their lessons, pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress and setting their own targets is limited. Written reports to parents are appropriate. They

give a clear indication of pupils' progress and the next steps they should take to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a very caring, well-organised community. Adults and pupils show mutual care and respect for each other. The school makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Learning experiences promote pupils' personal and spiritual development well. Daily acts of collective worship emphasise moral values, such as honesty and loyalty, as well as promoting pupils' spiritual awareness appropriately. Visits to the local church and library, and to locations in Wales, promote pupils' social and cultural development well.

The school has strong links with specialist agencies, businesses and other organisations. These provide pupils with a range of opportunities to understand their place in the wider community. For example, visits from the local Credit Union allow children to save their pocket money regularly and to develop their financial awareness well.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The school works well with external agencies to support pupils who feel emotionally or socially vulnerable.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Efficient strategies ensure that the school identifies pupils with additional learning needs at an early stage and teachers monitor their progress carefully. Teachers and support staff collaborate successfully in using a wide range of interventions aimed at developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Individual education plans are comprehensive and set out suitable targets for improvement.

Learning environment: Good

The school has an inclusive ethos and all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The school's accommodation is in good condition. Its interior is warm and welcoming. The classrooms and corridors are bright, attractive and contain displays of high quality. The displays also support school priorities, such as attendance and celebrating pupil progress with weekly 'Oscars' awards.

There are enough resources of good quality to support pupils' learning well. Libraries are well organised, resourced and maintained. Externally, areas of synthetic grass enhance the tarmac areas. Play areas have zones so that ball games do not interfere with pupils who prefer to play quietly.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that focuses appropriately on improving outcomes for pupils and recognises the importance of shared leadership. The restructured senior management team supports her vision well. In the relatively short time since her appointment, she has implemented initiatives that have had a significant, positive impact on provision and outcomes for pupils.

All staff understand their responsibilities clearly. They contribute to a detailed, accurate analysis of a wide range of performance data, which informs all their decisions about school improvement. The school is making good progress in introducing initiatives that meet local and national priorities, such as literacy, numeracy and assessment for learning strategies. These are having a positive impact on pupils' standards of achievement.

The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory obligations, and members offer good support to the school. The majority of governors have benefitted from training to help them conduct their business. They receive regular information about the school's strengths, shortcomings and future priorities and their understanding of the school's performance data is developing well. Although their involvement in the self-evaluation process is helping the development of their role as a critical friend, they do not challenge the school to improve robustly enough.

Improving quality: Good

The school's systems for self-evaluation are wide-ranging and lead to an accurate evaluation of its current performance. All staff contribute to self-evaluation strategies that draw on a wide range of first-hand evidence, including analysis of assessment data, observations of teaching and the scrutiny of pupils' work. The school seeks the views of pupils and parents as part of the process. Members of the governing body approve the plan.

Leaders have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation report is detailed and comprehensive. It accurately identifies where improvements are required across aspects of the school's life and work.

The outcomes of self-evaluation directly inform development planning. Leaders prioritise a manageable number of targets for school improvement in a detailed school development plan. The plan focuses clearly on improving outcomes for pupils. It includes measurable targets and indicates timescales, costs, and success criteria, and identifies staff with key roles in implementing the plan. The school sets quantified targets so that progress can be measured accurately.

The school's action plan for implementing the national literacy and numeracy framework is progressing well.

Partnership working: Good

The school works well with a wide range of partners to support and enhance pupils' learning. The partnership with parents is very strong and parents appreciate the way the school keeps them informed and listens to their views. The active parent-teacher

association has supported the school by providing playground equipment and funding the school website, which the school uses actively to keep parents well informed. Links with the receiving secondary school and neighbouring primary schools are good. Transition arrangements support pupils well as they move to the next stage of their education.

The school has worked with the cluster of primary schools to produce standardised portfolios of pupils' work that support consistency and accuracy of assessment. In addition, the school has joined with other schools in raising standards in physical education and sport and has, through joint funding, reduced the cost of introducing a scheme intended to raise standards in mathematics.

There are strong links with the local authority's education, health and social services departments. These help to promote pupils' progress and wellbeing. There are beneficial links with local colleges and teacher training institutions.

Resource management: Good

There are enough qualified teachers and support staff to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. Leaders and managers deploy teachers and support staff efficiently according to their expertise and experience. The school ensures that suitable arrangements are in place to manage the performance of all staff, and provides appropriate continuous professional development as a result. Arrangements for performance management are secure and meet legal requirements. Staff receive adequate time for planning, preparation and assessment.

The school is developing as a professional learning community. Staff are committed to working as a team and share good practice from each other's classrooms. Links with other schools in the area enrich pupils' learning experiences and have had a positive impact on raising standards in literacy.

Staff make full use of all parts of the school's building and grounds. They use resources of good quality efficiently to support learning and teaching.

The link between priorities for improvement and spending is clear. There is robust and efficient management of the school's budget. The school gives adequate value for money because, although the revised management structure is effective and the progress made by most pupils is good, standards are adequate overall.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The majority of pupils enter the school with skill levels that are above those expected of pupils of a similar age. In 2012, pupils' attainment at the end of the Foundation Phase at the expected outcome (outcome 5) in literacy, language and communication skills, mathematical development, personal and social skills and the Foundation Phase Indicator was below the average for schools in the same family and for primary schools in Wales. In 2013, pupils' attainment in language, literacy and communication skills was slightly below family and national averages, and was well below in mathematical development. Pupil outcomes in personal and social development were in line with family and national averages. However, in 2012 and 2013, comparison with similar schools (as determined by the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals) placed the school in the lower 50% and, for mathematical development, in the bottom 25%. At the higher than expected outcome (outcome 6), attainment in literacy and mathematical development was well below the averages for the family of schools, similar schools and Wales. However, in personal and social development, attainment placed the school in the upper 50%.

In key stage 2, pupils' attainment at the expected level 4 has fluctuated since 2010. Comparison with similar schools placed the school in the lower 50% in English in 2010 and 2011, in mathematics in 2012 and 2013 and in science in 2010 and 2013. In other years, attainment placed the school in the upper 50%.

At the higher than expected level (level 5), attainment in English, mathematics and science shows a decline since 2010 and 2011. At that time, pupils' attainment placed the school in the top 25% compared to similar schools. However, in 2012 and 2013, attainment in all three subjects placed the school in the bottom 25% compared with similar schools.

Attainment in Welsh as a second language is in line with the Welsh average in 2013, having been well above in 2011 and 2012.

Throughout the school, girls achieve more highly than boys in most subjects and areas of learning. Overall, pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve more highly than others. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in line with their ability.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Primary Questionnaire (Overall)

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	
I feel safe in my school.	116	116 100%	0 0%	Rwy'n teimlo'n ddiogel yn fy ysgol.
		98%	2%	
The school deals well with any bullying.	116	109 94%	7 6%	Mae'r ysgol yn delio'n dda ag unrhyw fwlio.
		92%	8%	
I know who to talk to if I am worried or upset.	116	115 99%	1 1%	Rwy'n gwybod pwy i siarad ag ef/â hi os ydw I'n poeni neu'n gofidio.
		97%	3%	
The school teaches me how to keep healthy	116	116 100%	0 0%	Mae'r ysgol yn fy nysgu i sut i aros yn iach.
		98%	2%	
There are lots of chances at school for me to get regular exercise.	116	110 95%	6 5%	Mae llawer o gyfleoedd yn yr ysgol i mi gael ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		96%	4%	
I am doing well at school	116	113 97%	3 3%	Rwy'n gwneud yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		96%	4%	
The teachers and other adults in the school help me to learn and make progress.	116	116 100%	0 0%	Mae'r athrawon a'r oedolion eraill yn yr ysgol yn fy helpu i ddsygu a gwneud cynnydd.
		99%	1%	
I know what to do and who to ask if I find my work hard.	116	115 99%	1 1%	Rwy'n gwybod beth I'w wneud a gyda phwy i siarad os ydw I'n gweld fy ngwaith yn anodd.
		98%	2%	
My homework helps me to understand and improve my work in school.	116	115 99%	1 1%	Mae fy ngwaith cartref yn helpu i mi ddeall a gwella fy ngwaith yn yr ysgol.
		91%	9%	
I have enough books, equipment, and computers to do my work.	116	110 95%	6 5%	Mae gen i ddigon o lyfrau, offer a chyfrifiaduron i wneud fy ngwaith.
		95%	5%	
Other children behave well and I can get my work done.	113	70 62%	43 38%	Mae plant eraill yn ymddwyn yn dda ac rwy'n gallu gwneud fy ngwaith.
		78%	22%	
Nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time	116	80 69%	36 31%	Mae bron pob un o'r plant yn ymddwyn yn dda amser chwarae ac amser cinio.
		84%	16%	

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the school.	36	27 75%	9 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r ysgol yn gyffredinol.
		63%	33%	3%	1%		
My child likes this school.	36	33 92%	3 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn hoffi'r ysgol hon.
		72%	26%	1%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school.	36	29 81%	7 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn yr ysgol.
		72%	26%	1%	0%		
My child is making good progress at school.	36	26 72%	9 25%	1 3%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn yr ysgol.
		61%	34%	3%	0%		
Pupils behave well in school.	36	20 56%	15 42%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae disgyblion yn ymddwyn yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		45%	46%	4%	1%		
Teaching is good.	36	26 72%	10 28%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		60%	35%	2%	0%		
Staff expect my child to work hard and do his or her best.	36	27 75%	9 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn disgwyl i fy mhentyn weithio'n galed ac i wneud ei orau.
		63%	34%	1%	0%		
The homework that is given builds well on what my child learns in school.	36	22 61%	11 31%	0 0%	0 0%	3	Mae'r gwaith cartref sy'n cael ei roi yn adeiladu'n dda ar yr hyn mae fy mhentyn yn ei ddysgu yn yr ysgol.
		47%	40%	6%	1%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	36	26 72%	9 25%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		58%	34%	4%	1%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	36	23 64%	10 28%	0 0%	0 0%	3	Caiff fy mhentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		59%	36%	2%	0%		
My child is safe at school.	36	28 78%	8 22%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn ddiogel yn yr ysgol.
		66%	31%	1%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs'.	32	15 47%	10 31%	1 3%	0 0%	6	Mae fy mhentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		50%	34%	4%	1%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	36	21 58%	13 36%	2 6%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhentyn.
		49%	41%	8%	2%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.	36	28 78%	8 22%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n esmwyth ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r ysgol, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		62%	31%	4%	2%		
I understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.	36	21 58%	11 31%	1 3%	0 0%	3	Rwy'n deall trefn yr ysgol ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		44%	39%	7%	2%		
The school helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility.	36	24 67%	9 25%	0 0%	0 0%	3	Mae'r ysgol yn helpu fy mhentyn i ddod yn fwy aeddfed ac i ysgwyddo cyfrifoldeb.
		55%	39%	2%	0%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to the next school or college or work.	33	20 61%	8 24%	1 3%	1 3%	3	Mae fy mhentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol nesaf neu goleg neu waith.
		42%	34%	4%	1%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	36	19 53%	11 31%	2 6%	2 6%	2	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		53%	38%	5%	1%		
The school is well run.	36	27 75%	9 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r ysgol yn cael ei rhedeg yn dda.
		61%	33%	3%	1%		

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Christopher Ian Dolby	Reporting Inspector
Carolyn Jane Thomas	Team Inspector
Andrew John Brazier	Lay Inspector
Beverley Cole	Peer Inspector
Gemma Jones	Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.