



*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**

**Tongwynlais Primary School  
Merthyr Road  
Tongwynlais  
Cardiff  
CF15 7LF**

**Date of inspection: March 2012**

**by**

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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## Context

Tongwynlais Primary School is a community school for boys and girls aged between three and eleven. The 172 pupils come mainly from the immediate area of Tongwynlais. Pupil numbers have risen steadily over the last six years. Around 18% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is in line with local and national averages. Currently, no pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority.

The school opened in 1908 but has been remodelled and extended recently. The school building and teaching areas are surrounded by spacious and well-appointed outdoor facilities. There are seven classes with four single age classes in the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, there are two mixed-age classes and one single-age class. The school has seven full-time teachers, two part-time teachers and twelve teaching assistants.

English is the main language for most pupils. A few pupils receive support for English as an additional language and a very few pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Approximately 10% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and they speak either Arabic or French at home.

Approximately 21% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs, and 3% have a statement of special educational needs. Two pupils were excluded temporarily in the year preceding the inspection.

The individual school budget per pupil for Tongwynlais Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £4,172 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £19,708 and the minimum is £2,828. Tongwynlais Primary School is the 18th highest funded out of the 101 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

The headteacher has been in post since 2007. The last inspection was conducted in 2006.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### Current performance

The school provides an excellent quality of education and is a leader in its sector because:

- most pupils make excellent progress and achieve high standards;
- the curriculum is innovative and at the forefront of development in both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2;
- the quality of teaching and assessment is often excellent;
- care, support and guidance are of high quality;
- strategic leadership and management are excellent; and
- partnerships with other schools, the local authority and universities are outstanding.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because its senior leaders and governors provide highly effective leadership and share a sharply focused vision for improvement. Thorough self-evaluation processes lead to accurate judgments about performance. Improvement planning focuses sharply on the most important priorities. The issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed well and many other improvements have also been achieved.

## Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

- R1 continue to raise the standards of more able boys in oracy, writing and science;
- R2 provide displays that are interactive and encourage pupils' independent participation;
- R3 make the school improvement plan more concise and accessible to all stakeholders; and
- R4 further develop formal consultations with parents and carers through surveys and questionnaires.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

The school will also be invited to prepare a written case study describing the sector leading features identified in this report.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

#### Standards: Excellent

Most pupils start the school with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. Over time, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make outstanding progress in their learning. In both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, pupils' performance compares very well with that of pupils in other similar schools. Most more able pupils achieve higher than the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. The relative performance of boys and girls has varied over the last four years but boys who are more able have tended to under-perform a little in speaking, writing and science.

By the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well above average standards in speaking, listening and writing. The reading skills of many are excellent.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils develop very good speaking and listening skills, through a range of appropriate activities such as hot seating and role-play. In key stage 2, most pupils successfully continue to build their confidence in speaking articulately. They express their ideas and opinions, using a growing range of vocabulary, over a broad range of tasks. Most listen carefully and concentrate well during class activities for sustained periods.

Many pupils in the Foundation Phase enjoy books. They effectively develop their skills to build and decode unfamiliar words using phonic strategies. More able pupils in Year 2 read with increasing fluency and expression and they are developing very good simple research skills. Many pupils in key stage 2 read a wide range of books with enjoyment, understanding and fluency. They competently use a range of sources to locate information, and present their research in their own words. More able pupils in Year 6 have good higher order reading skills and can skim and scan a text efficiently to quickly locate specific information.

The quality of pupils' writing in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 is very good. Many pupils have a secure grasp of punctuation and spelling and their work is often tidy and well presented. More able pupils achieve excellent standards in writing in English, and all pupils' ability to write independently and at length across the curriculum is well developed. Most pupils are able to plan and redraft their work and use peer-assessment and self-assessment successfully to identify areas for improvement. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in relation to their abilities, especially in reading.

Pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology skills are excellent. Because they develop their thinking skills very well, many pupils make excellent progress by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in developing their literacy skills.

Nearly all pupils achieve good standards in Welsh. They use incidental Welsh confidently throughout the school and have a good understanding of the culture and history of Wales.

### **Wellbeing: Excellent**

The standard of pupils' wellbeing is excellent. Pupils enjoy school life, feel safe and are proud of their school.

Most pupils are enthusiastic and well-motivated learners. They work hard in lessons, are good listeners and adopt a positive approach to learning. Pupils' behaviour is good. As they move through the school they take on greater responsibilities. They are friendly and polite and show care, respect and concern for others. Many pupils are regularly involved with community activities and these experiences help them to develop as rounded and confident individuals. Pupils are involved to a good extent in deciding how and what they learn. For example, they have very good opportunities to choose activities independently in the Foundation Phase. They work well independently and as part of a group. Many pupils have excellent problem solving and decision-making skills. They take responsibility for their learning and evaluate effectively their own work and that of their peers. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of how to improve their work.

Many pupils have a good appreciation of the importance of living healthily. They understand the reasons for eating healthily and many participate in the physical activities the school provides.

School attendance is consistently good at 95%. This compares favourably with attendance in similar schools and nationally. Virtually all pupils are punctual in attending lessons.

Pupils express their ideas well in the school council. Representatives feel that their views are valued and their suggestions and decisions make a positive contribution to the school. The eco-council meets regularly and ensures that pupils' opinions on issues arising from environmental care, global warming and poverty in the third world can be considered fully.

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

The school provides learning experiences of exceptional quality which meet the needs of all pupils in an exemplary way. The curriculum is highly innovative and at the leading edge of development in the sector. It embodies current academic expertise from three British universities in addition to thinking skills strategies from Australia and America. The curriculum contributes significantly towards the wellbeing of pupils and the raising of standards both in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2.

Teachers' planning of key skills is a great strength. Their planning clearly sets out the progressive development of communication, numeracy, and information and

communication technology skills across all subjects. Well planned activities give pupils excellent opportunities to apply these skills and build on prior learning.

A highly effective range of innovative strategies are applied to develop thinking, problem solving and creative skills. These strategies are well developed and promote pupils' independent learning and social skills outstandingly well.

The school promotes the Welsh language and the use of incidental Welsh with great determination and considerable success from the Nursery upwards. Teachers and pupils also promote the Welsh dimension with great creativity and vigour across all subjects as well as in many assemblies. One example is how the school rewards pupils who speak Welsh often in the playground at breaktimes with its 'Seren Ddraig' award.

Learning experiences and the activities of the eco committee effectively promote pupils' knowledge of sustainability and the environment. The eco committee makes an important contribution to school life. Pupils' understanding of global citizenship is promoted effectively through the school's links with a primary school in Rwanda and by studying countries such as India, China and Kenya.

### **Teaching: Excellent**

The quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils.

They share clear learning objectives with pupils and use a wide range of resources and activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. Teachers' subject knowledge is often excellent and informs the quality of lesson content to a marked degree. As a result, all pupils are engaged in their learning and sustain concentration for extended periods.

Well trained teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. The strength of teamwork and joint planning between teachers and teaching assistants is a major factor in the high quality of teaching and learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They promote extensively the use of key skills and thinking skills. As a result, many pupils are independent thinkers and learners.

All staff use effectively a wide range of resources and activities to achieve high standards in teaching and learning.

Teachers and teaching assistants use highly effective assessment strategies to identify strengths and shortcomings in pupils' understanding and to plan for further improvement. Regular assessment procedures enable staff and pupils to set and review targets for improvement in learning. Oral feedback to pupils is good and marking of work is thorough, detailed and helpful. Teachers' systematic use of the assessment processes contributes greatly to improving pupils' standards and the quality of planning and teaching. Parents and carers are well informed of their child's progress.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

The quality of care, support and guidance is excellent. The school has excellent policies and procedures to promote pupils' wellbeing and enable effective teaching and learning. These have a highly positive impact on school life and pupils' progress. The benefits of healthy living are endorsed throughout the curriculum and also in a wide range of popular extra-curricular activities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively through programmes which address the social and emotional aspects of learning. These sessions have a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and aid transition to secondary school. Teachers use school assemblies well to celebrate pupils' academic, sporting and pastoral achievements.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding. Pupils make very good progress in learning as a result. Early identification and the implementation of appropriate literacy and numeracy support programmes ensure that all pupils make excellent progress and achieve the targets set. The school makes highly effective use of specialist services to ensure that all pupils get good support and guidance.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school has a lively and pervasive ethos for learning. Staff and pupils operate within a climate of mutual respect, care and trust.

The school is a very caring and well organised, family orientated community, which values every member equally well. It provides a safe and secure environment for all pupils. Its inclusive ethos promotes equal opportunities well and teaches pupils to respect and celebrate diversity. The racial equality policy and plans are in place and satisfy statutory requirements. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils, and appropriate procedures ensure that behaviour is good throughout the school.

The indoor and outdoor spaces provide stimulating learning environments. Outdoor provision in the Foundation Phase has been imaginatively developed to promote learning through play in an extremely well-structured way. Generally, the buildings are well maintained. The school has good supplies of resources, which are organised extremely well to enhance learning.

Around the school, visitors can find a variety of colourful wall displays that inform and celebrate pupils' curricular achievements. There are, however, too few opportunities in wall displays for pupils to enhance their independent learning by interacting with displays independently.

The school makes excellent use of the community to enhance its curricular provision.

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

The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Leaders and managers communicate priorities for improvement widely. Strategic leadership has an outstanding impact on improving pupils' standards and the quality of provision. All staff share a very clear direction. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and shared effectively. Meetings for teaching and support staff are frequent and facilitate the development of policies and procedures. As a result, the school enjoys a strong sense of teamwork and a consistent approach to teaching and delivering the curriculum.

Staff morale is very high and teachers work in close and effective partnership with local authority advisers, university researchers and parents. The headteacher is very well organised and is highly effective in challenging staff to achieve their best. Her leadership style is characterised by supportive mentoring, attention to detail, appropriate delegation, empowerment of staff and a sharp, determined focus on school improvement. A series of innovative curriculum projects have been managed with great success. Performance management arrangements for teachers are thorough and meet statutory requirements.

The governing body makes a very good contribution to the running of the school. Governors are well informed about their roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures. They provide the school with effective support and challenge.

The school takes excellent account of local and national initiatives. It has rightly been used as a model of good practice by the local authority for its development of the Foundation Phase and the skills based curriculum at key stage 2.

**Improving quality: Excellent**

The quality of self-evaluation is excellent. Leaders, managers and governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. The school has a strong ethos of continuous improvement. There is a clear focus on improving outcomes for pupils through systematic reviews of teaching, standards and the curriculum.

The school has rigorous and robust systems to collect, analyse and evaluate information from a wide range of sources. Data is used effectively to inform planning and assess standards. The self-evaluation process engages all staff and local authority partners and takes good account of the views of a range of stakeholders.

That said, the school has identified that it needs to increase formal parental involvement in the self-evaluation process.

The self-evaluation report is used very effectively to identify priorities and address school improvement. There are many clear links between the self-evaluation report and the detailed and comprehensive school improvement plan. Staff are involved fully in the process of school improvement and use the school improvement plan well

to bring about improvements. However, the plan is not concise enough and, as a result, it is not always easily accessible for all stakeholders.

Links with professional partners, such as three British universities, contribute effectively towards improving pupils' outcomes. Teachers work closely with staff from other schools to ensure that the outstanding practices at Tongwynlais are shared comprehensively across the local authority. These very good links also do much to support the continuous professional development of staff.

The school has made excellent progress in not just addressing all the recommendations made in its previous inspection report but in many other areas of school improvement.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The school has established very strong and effective strategic partnerships with a wide range of external agencies. Very effective and supportive links have been established with three universities. Staff undertake joint research programmes to improve areas such as thinking skills and guided reading. These partnerships contribute greatly to raising pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of teaching.

The school makes highly effective use of the local community and shares resources with other schools to extend and enhance its provision. Staff work closely with pre-school agencies and the main receiving secondary school to ensure outstanding transition arrangements. There is much joint planning and sharing of information on pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 3 and Year 6 to Year 7. Also, staff from Tongwynlais are on the governing bodies of linked schools and thus closely aware of developments. Pupils and parents comment very positively on the good continuity in learning from Year 6 to Year 7. The school's partnerships contribute outstandingly towards joint quality assurance and its own improvement.

### **Resource management: Excellent**

The management of staff and resources is a major strength of the school. Staff are deployed effectively in very well organised and vibrant teams. Joint planning, preparation and assessment sessions ensure high levels of consistency and excellent standards in teaching and planning. Spending decisions relate accurately and effectively to priorities for improvement. They are monitored and reviewed regularly.

The school provides excellent value for money. Highly effective management of resources helps pupils to make excellent progress and achieve standards well above those of similar schools.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

There were 23 completed responses to the parental questionnaire. Most parents express positive views about the school. In particular, almost all are pleased with the school and say their children like being there. They feel that their children are making good progress and are safe at school. Most parents find staff approachable if they have any questions or concerns. Almost all feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. A few parents were unsure of modern developments in mathematics and felt that they could not help their children in mathematics and Welsh as much as they wanted to. A very small minority felt that the school does not deal with complaints well.

### Responses to pupils' questionnaires

There were 65 responses from pupils in key stage 2 to the questionnaire. Almost all feel safe in school and most believe that the school deals well with any bullying. Nearly all think that they are well supported; especially having someone to talk to if they are worried. Almost all feel that they are doing well at school, and believe that 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

Robert Isaac	Reporting Inspector
William Griffiths	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Christine Jackson	Peer Inspector
Judith Davies	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

### Year groups and key stages

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

The term 'Reception' (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.