



*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  
Greenfield School  
Duffryn Road  
Pentrebach  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 4BJ**

**Date of inspection: November 2010**

**by**

**H J Phillips**

**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:

<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

Greenfield School is situated on the southern outskirts of Merthyr Tydfil and is the only special school in the authority. It is a co-educational special school for up to 147 pupils aged 3 to 19 with special educational needs. It makes provision for a wide range of special needs including moderate, severe, and profound and multiple learning difficulties (MLD, SLD and PMLD respectively), specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), and pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Some pupils also have additional sensory difficulties of vision and/or hearing and some have speech and communication difficulties. Almost all of the pupils come from English speaking backgrounds and just over half are entitled to free school meals. Two pupils are from out of the county and seven pupils are looked after by the local authority (LA).

Provision is made on two adjacent sites, one accommodating the pupils at the primary level and the other for pupils of secondary age. Students who are over 16(Post-16) are included on the secondary site but have access to a local college for one day a week. Provision is made offsite for a very small minority of senior pupils whose needs are best met through an alternative special programme of education and training. A specialist provision has been made for pupils with ASD within the school.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Greenfield Special School is £11728 which compares to a national average of £16993 for all special schools in Wales.

The school was last inspected in 2004.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Greenfield is a good school because:

- Pupils' achievement is consistently good irrespective of their gender, social background, ethnicity or nature of their special educational needs.
- As pupils progress through the school, they demonstrate increasing independence and confidently access the local community and work experience placements, successfully transferring to further education or work placements on leaving school.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum in all key stages appropriate to pupil's needs.
- A particular strength is the school's robust and very effective systems to assess, evaluate, and track pupils' progress across subjects, skills and groups of learners.
- There is excellent provision for pupils' health and wellbeing.
- The school provides a very caring, secure and happy learning environment for all its learners.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because strategic leadership and management are very strong with an outstanding commitment to a range of well-considered initiatives to raise standards and improve provision to meet the changing needs of the pupils. These include:

The development of a skills-based curriculum with common themes to provide pupils with 'connected learning';

- Further development in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum;
- Distributive leadership involving and motivating staff to work together in departmental groups as professional learning communities;
- The strong partnerships with mainstream and special schools that are promoting collaborative work to mutual benefit;
- Promoting pupils' well-being including the development of the school sports programme;
- The use of effective performance data to identify needs and promote strategies to raise standards across a diverse range of pupil needs.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and governors of Greenfield School need to:

- R1 strengthen the development of pupils' numeracy skills;\*
- R2 improve pupils' Welsh Language development:\*
- R3 ensure that lesson planning more consistently takes full account of the range of pupils' needs and abilities;
- R4 ensure that pupils' speech and language needs are more fully met; and
- R5 consult more widely with partners in provision as part of the school's self evaluation process.

The recommendations marked by a '\*' have already been identified as in need of improvement in the school's development plan.

### What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Pupils' achievement of their learning targets in lessons is consistently good and occasionally excellent.

Standards of achievement in the pupils' work in all key stages were judged to be good. Nearly all pupils achieve externally accredited qualifications by the time they leave school.

Assessment data clearly shows that pupils' achievement is consistently good irrespective of their gender, social background, ethnicity or nature of their special educational needs. Pupils are gaining good skills of listening, communicating, thinking, evaluating own performance, use of ICT, working together, problem solving and independence.

Pupils' progress in developing their skills in numeracy and Welsh is less evident. The school's assessment data shows that pupils make small gains in their numeracy skills. The quality of incidental Welsh spoken by learners is adequate and improving. They show a good understanding of aspects of the history and geography of Wales.

Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) also make good progress in their learning, both educationally and personally.

#### Wellbeing: Excellent

Pupils are highly engaged in developing healthy eating at school through Appetite for Life, a Welsh Assembly initiative. Pupils are proud about how they have been able to influence school meals to benefit everyone at the school and have a strong awareness of what makes a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils make excellent progress and achieve very good standards of behaviour with increasing self-confidence and self esteem as they progress through the school.

The school council is well established and highly effective in improving school life. Members of the school council significantly develop their social and life skills through their participation in making decisions about school life and represent the views of their peers well.

Pupils' good attendance and their achievement of high standards of behaviour are reflected in their full participation in lessons and school activities.

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

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum in all key stages appropriate to pupil's needs. Continuity and progression is promoted through mid and short term planning and relevant implementation of the key skills framework. The school has worked alongside the ESIS advisory team to develop activities for thinking skills and assessment for learning that are consistently delivered across all phases. Provision for communication, numeracy and ICT is used effectively to aid teaching and support pupils' learning.

Welsh language provision is developing across the school and takes good account of learners' abilities. Although Welsh is supported by a range of displays, there is insufficient use of the language to promote and develop oral skills on a progressive basis. The inclusion of Cwricwlwm Cymreig effectively contributes towards learners understanding and awareness of the heritage and culture of Wales.

The 14-19 Learning Pathways successfully address the individual needs of all learners, providing them with suitable and effective programmes of study and experiences as they approach school leaving age.

All pupils in key stage 4(KS4) and students in Post -16 have access to accredited courses. The school works effectively with a range of partners to provide opportunities for work related experiences and transition into further education. This is a strength of the school.

There is good provision to enable all learners to develop their understanding about healthy living, sustainability and global citizenship as well as a range of therapies and educational visits that enrich opportunities across key stages. Extra-curricular activities such as gardening, sports and music provided during lunchtimes successfully extend pupils learning.

### **Teaching: Good**

Where teaching is most effective, teachers make excellent use of a wide range of resources and strategies to ensure that all learners' individual needs are met.

Many teachers make effective use of ICT and thinking skills across subject areas, and show good knowledge of learners' needs. Together with learning support assistants (LSAs), teachers successfully establish a very supportive environment that fosters learning and makes sure that learners understand what is required of them in relation to their targets. They successfully involve the learners in evaluating their own learning and setting their targets. Work and activities are regularly checked and learners receive useful advice on how to improve their work.

Nearly all teachers make effective use of a range of communication strategies to stimulate and maintain learners' concentration and interest. However, in a few lessons, introductions are too long and tasks do not always match learners' ability levels.

The school has robust and very effective systems to assess, evaluate, and track pupils' progress across subjects. A particular strength within this process is the means of identifying and addressing the needs of specific groups of learners, such as those with behavioural problems, and adapting the way their needs are addressed as appropriate.

Reports to parents are clear and provide useful information on how well their children are progressing.

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

There is very good provision for pupils' health and wellbeing. The school promotes effectively the benefits of healthy living. Pupil behaviour and wellbeing is identified and tracked through highly effective school monitoring. As a result, staff successfully contribute to pupils' development and support individual learning needs. This initiative is sector-leading practice.

Children display very good social and moral development, relating well to one another.

All teachers provide very good advice and guidance to learners. The effective use of a range of supportive and specialist services ensures a particularly good support and guidance; this includes access to the support of a learning coach.

The school has an appropriate policy and effective procedures for safeguarding as well as ensuring that all staff have had CRB checks.

Provision for pupils with ALN is good. The school ensures that all pupils with ALN access all areas of the curriculum. A range of effective support systems is used well to enable them to achieve good standards. However, despite the school's good and effective practices to enable all pupils to communicate effectively, specialist speech and language therapy is not at present available to meet the needs of those pupils identified in need of support in their statements of special educational needs.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school provides a very caring, secure and happy learning environment for all its learners. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils built on mutual respect. Staff maintain a very positive approach with an emphasis on recognising and celebrating individual learners' achievements and promoting pupils' awareness of equality of opportunity and a respect for diversity.

The school buildings and grounds are attractive and well maintained. There is sufficient provision of toilets and changing facilities to meet pupils' personal needs. Classrooms and specialist teaching rooms are well resourced, and provide a stimulating learning environment, well matched to pupils' learning needs.

<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 school's aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies are clear, very well matched to the needs of the pupils and to local and national priorities for development. Planned improvements are being effectively implemented through the very well-considered distributed leadership throughout the school.

Roles and responsibilities are clear and effective professional learning communities have been established across all departments, promoting very good monitoring, evaluation and appropriate initiatives to improve provision. Excellent teamwork within and between departments ensures that school improvement projects are being effectively managed and achieved.

Senior managers meet regularly and this, along with departmental meetings, enables good communication and a very positive ethos towards school improvement. All staff feel valued and pupils are proud of their contributions to school improvement.

The school's very good systems for recording and collecting data on pupils' achievement are effectively used to decide and monitor the outcomes of projects for improvement, with full consideration of the diversity of pupils' needs.

Very good procedures are established for the performance management of staff resulting in very good development of staff expertise, effectively meeting the diverse range of pupils' needs. Several staff carry out in-house training of colleagues and provide outreach training and support for mainstream schools.

**Improving quality: Excellent**

A very strong culture of self-evaluation has been established with a well planned cycle of activities and tasks. Through highly effective and systematic use of assessment data, strengths and priorities for further development are clearly identified. This process also ensures that the effect of various initiatives designed to improve the school are fully evaluated.

The school's self evaluation report is comprehensive and takes very good account of the views of all staff, learners, and parents. Evidence gathered by subject leaders and through performance management is used effectively to identify areas for development and celebration. However, some opportunities are missed to gather the views of supportive and community based organisations involved with the school, such as employers.

The school makes very effective use of a wide range of initiatives to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This has led to a collective and collaborative approach to evaluating and planning and significantly contributes towards meeting school, local and national priorities.

Senior staff and the governing body monitor the quality of management and teaching at all levels, and all benefit from a range of training courses to improve their leadership skills.

The school has made very good progress in addressing nearly all the key issues from the last inspection and is very well placed to continue to improve provision as the well-considered current initiatives become embedded in school practice.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The school has well established partnerships within the community and the local authority, with mainstream schools, and with other special schools within the region.

Staff work effectively with a number of outside organisations to ensure learners benefit from an extended range of valuable learning experiences and resources. Very good collaborative work has led to on-going improvement in the development of pupils' personal and social education and to the provision being made for students in preparing them for leaving school and moving on to further education training or work when they leave school.

The school is using Welsh Assembly Government funding for 'Unlocking the Potential of Special Schools' to lead a worthwhile initiative supporting local schools in positive behaviour management. The outcomes from this project are making a significant contribution to the strategies being used to effectively manage pupils' behaviour, both in mainstream schools and at Greenfield.

Professional partnerships with other special schools are particularly productive for staff development through the sharing of good practice and the research and development of important aspects of provision such as 'wellbeing', the 'Foundation Phase' and 'assessment for learning'.

Effective 'professional learning communities' are established with mainstream schools, special schools and the advisory team. The outcomes from these partnerships relating to the development provision for pupils' wellbeing and behaviour management, are examples of sector-leading practice.

Parents work well with the school and many of the school's specialist resources have been provided through fund-raising initiatives and charitable donations.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its resources well. Accommodation and resources are good, a significant number of these have been provided by charitable organisations. Recent budget restrictions have resulted in the loss of a number of experienced staff, but the school has responded effectively by reorganising staff deployment in order to best meet the learning needs of the pupils. Spending priorities link with the school's improvement plan and are reviewed regularly by the governing body, who in turn work closely with the headteacher and LA to ensure best value.

Staff are well qualified, a number provide outreach training for other organisations. There are good systems in place to manage teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time, and performance management.

Standards of teaching and support are consistently good, the school is successful in ensuring that pupils make good progress both in their attainment and social development, consequently, it provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

The 10 parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed, most strongly so, that the school helped their child to quickly settle into school, enjoyed going to school, were safe and were treated fairly and with respect. All thought that the quality of teaching was good, that the children were expected to do their best and were making good progress, that homework builds well on school work and that appropriate additional support is provided according to individual need.

A very small minority did not feel comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or complaints or that their child was sufficiently well prepared for leaving school. However, inspectors found that the school has good procedures for complaints and that pupils' preparation for leaving school is a particularly strong feature of school provision.

#### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

Nearly all learners feel respected and safe and think that they are doing well in school. They know who to talk to if worried. Most think that the school deals well with bullying. However, a minority of pupils in KS2 and some girls in KS4 do not agree. The inspectors found no evidence of bullying and judged that the school has effective ways of supporting pupils who feel vulnerable.

Nearly all pupils and students feel that they are encouraged to do things for themselves, that their views are listened to and that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. All think that they have enough books and equipment to do their work and most feel that homework helps them to improve their work. Most pupils in KS4 and students over 16 think that they were given good advice in choosing suitable courses.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Jim Phillips	Reporting Inspector
Catherine Jenkins	Lay Inspector
Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
Susan Painter	Team Inspector
Gillian Unwin	Team Inspector
Lesley Bush	Peer Inspector
Wayne Murphy	School Nominee

### Contractor:

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## 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 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
Post-16	Year 12 and Year 13