



*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**

**Ysgol Tremeirchion  
Tremeirchion  
St Asaph  
Denbighshire  
LL17 0UD**

**Date of inspection: November 2011**

**by**

**Mr. Wil Williams**

**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

Tremeirchion is a voluntary Church in Wales primary school which provides Welsh medium education for the children of Tremeirchion itself and the surrounding rural area. The original building which was built over one hundred and fifty years ago and which was adapted in 2003 has four classrooms in addition to an extensive playing field.

According to the school, pupils come from a social background that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. At present, there are no pupils entitled to receive free school meals or pupils that are looked after by the local authority.

Welsh is the language used at home for approximately 14 percent of the pupils. The school's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh.

The number of pupils has decreased since the last inspection which was held in February 2006. At present there are 39 pupils between 4-11 years of age as well as fourteen part time nursery children in the school. They are arranged in three mixed age classes. There are no pupils from an ethnic group or pupils that learn English as an additional language.

Pupils encompass the full ability range and their achievement varies when they start at school. Approximately 13 per cent of pupils have additional learning needs, a figure which is slightly lower than county and national percentages. There is no pupil with a statutory statement of additional learning needs.

The individual school budget in 2011-2012 per pupil for Ysgol Tremeirchion is £5,100. The maximum per pupil for primary school in Denbighshire is £9,248 and the minimum £2,719. Ysgol Tremeirchion has the 12<sup>th</sup> highest budget per pupil of the 52 primary schools in the Denbighshire Authority.

Following a period of instability, the present head teacher was appointed in January 2011

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The school's present performance is good because:

- standards in literacy are good with most pupils making sound progress through the school;
- pupils of all ages make good progress in the learning;
- pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well;
- on the whole the quality of teaching is good ; and
- the high quality of the learning experiences motivate pupils to make good progress.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the quality of leadership is good;
- the recently established self-evaluation procedures are likely to lead to further improvements;
- all staff work effectively as a team and are willing to undertake new initiatives; and
- the school has made good progress since the last inspection.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further the school needs to:

R1 implement assessment for learning strategies more consistently;

R2 aim to increase the percentage of pupils attaining levels 3 and 5; and

R3 continue to develop the curriculum co-ordinators' role.

### What happens next?

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

## Main findings

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

good

#### Standards: Good

The literacy skills of pupils of all ages are good. Nearly all pupils in the Foundation Stage listen attentively during collective sessions and convey their ideas confidently and correctly. They have an interest in books with most choosing books independently and they use a wide range of strategies to enable them to read unfamiliar words. By Year 1, many have started writing in a conventional manner using words, phrases and sentences effectively to communicate their ideas.

All pupils in key stage 2 listen carefully during lessons and contribute purposefully in group and class discussions. Most are confident readers and, by the end of the key stage, gather information in an orderly manner from various sources, such as books and websites. By year 5, many pupils write skilfully for a number of purposes and show an increased fluency and correctness in their work.

Most pupils have good problem solving skills and this has a positive impact on their learning and the standards they achieve. Their thinking skills are developing appropriately.

A very small number of pupils in both key stages were assessed at the end of the last academic year. During the last five years, on the whole, pupils of both key stages achieved on a higher level when compared with national benchmarks and similar schools. Although only a very small number of pupils achieve level 3 in key stage 1 and level 5 at key stage 2, no evidence of underachievement by any group of pupils was seen during lesson observation. Girls and boys in both key stages perform equally well.

Pupils in all classes give of their best in lessons and make good progress in their learning. Nearly all concentrate and persevere on their tasks, they are alert to enquire and ask questions and work productively using their time effectively. Although pupils discuss their tasks confidently, the ability of many to analyse the strengths of their work and identify what is required of them in order to improve, has not been sufficiently developed. Most pupils, including the most gifted and talented, work to their full potential.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Behaviour is good in all classes with pupils showing respect and care towards each other and towards adults. The ethos of the school is a happy and positive one and there is no concern regarding any abuse or threatening behaviour.

During the lessons, pupils of all ages are industrious and enthusiastic and face new challenges and learning confidently. They collaborate harmoniously and keep diligently on task for extended periods. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to

keep healthy and they appreciate the opportunities to have healthy food and develop fitness.

As they mature, most enjoy and benefit from a variety of experiences and opportunities to undertake responsibilities including the school council and the eco-group. The council has an active role in the life of the school and the members enjoy the opportunities they have to influence and make decisions.

Attendance rates are consistently good and more often than not, higher than all-Wales rates and those for similar schools and Wales.

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

The wide range of learning experiences provided successfully fulfil the needs of pupils, employers and the community. The various extra-curricular activities augment these experiences. In the Foundation Phase, the breadth of interesting and stimulating experiences that are planned enable children to make good progress towards meeting the necessary learning outcomes. The outside area is used purposefully to provide rich learning experiences for children. Careful planning in key stage 2 builds on the pupils' knowledge and understanding and ensures continuity and progression in their learning.

The Cwricwlwm Cymreig has a central role in the school's programme of work and effective use is made of local people to provide numerous and stimulating experiences and activities. The curriculum enables pupils to develop many personal and social skills and promotes a positive understanding of their culture and environment.

The opportunities for pupils to develop key skills, especially literacy skills, have been thoroughly planned throughout the school. Intervention programmes aimed at pupils with low literacy skills, enable these pupils to gain the necessary skills needed to access the wider curriculum.

On the whole, provision for promoting pupils knowledge and understanding of sustainability and global citizenship is good. However, at present the eco-committee's role has not been developed to its full potential.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of the teaching is good with teachers using a wide range of teaching strategies effectively to present lessons in a lively and very enthusiastic manner. Activities are planned purposefully and in detail and there are numerous opportunities for pupils to discuss and express their opinions. A wide range of learning resources is thoughtfully used to engage interest and stimulate learning. Across the school, good use is made of questioning to extend pupils' thinking skills and to widen their knowledge and understanding.

In all classes, there are close relationships between adults and pupils and good behaviour is encouraged in a positive and constructive manner. Support staff is used effectively and give good assistance to pupils.

Assessment at the Foundation Phase is robust and the information used very purposefully to inform future planning. In key stage 2, a number of assessment strategies are effectively used to promote learning and to give constructive feedback to pupils on the quality of their work. The clear records that are kept on every pupil are skilfully used to track progress, compare outcomes with local and national benchmarks and to identify individuals who require additional support. Oral feedback and teachers' marking enable pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality with appropriate opportunities for pupils and parents to respond to the comments.

Teachers recently have given high priority to establishing assessment for learning strategies in their classes but at present these strategies have not embedded themselves deeply enough in the learning and teaching practices of every class.

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

The provision for pupils' health and wellbeing is good. A warm and welcoming environment is provided for pupils and members of staff ensure that the needs of all individuals are met. There are policies and procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and that they fulfil their emotional and physical wellbeing successfully. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and through physical activities and after school clubs, they receive a wide variety of opportunities to improve their levels of fitness and health. The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

The school consistently promotes good attendance and ensures that pupils and parents are aware of its expectations.

Through a wide range of experiences, pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully developed. Useful information about the life of the school is available for pupils and parents. This includes the school prospectus, regular circulars and the governors' annual report.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Pupils' needs are identified early by teachers and there are good quality individual learning plans each pupil. They are reviewed regularly in consultation with parents and appropriate specialist agencies. Recently the school has started to use performance data more purposefully to identify more able and talented pupils.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is a happy and inclusive community, where pupils have equal access to all the educational and social provision. Clear emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity and creating an ethos that fosters care and tolerance. There is a good supply of relevant resources which is of good quality and has been appropriately matched for the whole range of age and ability.

The building is of good quality and the school utilises all available space purposefully and for the benefit of the pupils. The outside area for the Foundation Phase and Year 2 is a valuable and interesting resource which provides a variety of stimulating experiences for pupils.

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

The head teacher's skilful leadership and management is a key factor to the good standards achieved by pupils of all ages. In a comparatively short time, he has succeeded in harnessing the commitment of staff, pupils, parents and governors very effectively giving a strong sense of purpose and direction to the development of the school.

The head teacher and the staff have good knowledge of the school and a clear vision of how it should improve. They have a strong personal commitment to its success and through close collaboration they regularly examine ways of raising pupil achievement standards and improving the quality of provision. Through robust performance management arrangements, training and development needs of staff as well as the needs of the school, are identified and met effectively. Although teachers undertake a good share of responsibilities their role as curriculum co-ordinators has not been fully developed.

By now, there are clear procedures for ensuring that all statutory requirements are undertaken and that the everyday running of the school is smooth. The school is administered and organized effectively.

Governors undertake their responsibilities very conscientiously. Regular class visits in addition to the detailed reports they receive from the head teacher, give them a good understanding of the school's strengths and development needs. They are fully included in all the school's strategic decisions and they effectively undertake their responsibilities as critical friends of the school. The governing body has a policy and appropriate arrangements for responding to complaints.

With the head teacher's guidance, the school has recently given detailed attention in its programme of work to national and local priorities. At present it is working towards the Eco Schools gold award and the fourth tier of the Healthy Schools award. Recently, teachers have started to incorporate a number of assessment for learning strategies in their work. However, these aspects are in the early stage of development. The Foundation Phase is very well established in the school's culture and is having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning experiences.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The processes of self-evaluation and strategic planning are a regular part of the school's working life with staff consistently striving to improve upon previous performance. Various indicators, including evidence from other agencies such as the

local authority advisory service, are used effectively by the school when evaluating its current performance.

Performance data is effectively and consistently used to monitor progress and to plan for improving standards. The school regularly seeks the views of pupils, parents/carers and the wider community and carefully considers any suggestions made. This process ensures increased improvement.

Although self-evaluation is in its early days of development, the processes established recently have had a positive influence on the school plans for maintaining improvements. The school's self-evaluation report conveys an honest picture of its present position and notes clearly the areas that need to be further developed.

A strong professional learning community has been established in the school and recently has been a key instrument for promoting improvements. There are ambitious plans for establishing learning communities with a number of other partners, but as yet they have not been implemented.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 2005 and has addressed nearly all the recommendations identified in the report. Developing the curriculum co-ordinators' role continues to be a priority.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has a range of useful strategic partnerships. Relationships with parents are very good. They regularly help with reading lessons and extra-curricular activities and have an active role in discussing their children's improvement targets. The close relationship with the local community has a positive influence on the quality of education. Links with various agencies promotes pupils' wellbeing appropriately.

The very strong transition links between the 'cylch meithrin' and the school ensures that nursery pupils settle down quickly in school and that there is continuity and progression in their learning. The school also collaborates closely with a cluster of primary schools in the catchment as well as a number of other schools, to plan co-operatively, share experiences and exchange practices. There is close collaboration with the secondary school for moderating teacher assessments and preparing the older pupils for the next stage in their education.

### **Resource management: Good**

Staff and resources are managed and used effectively to support and improve learning. The school uses teaching staff and support staff well by taking full advantage of their time and expertise to deal with all aspects of the curriculum. The impact resources have on teaching and learning is regularly reviewed and there is detailed planning regarding future needs. There are systematic and accurate budgetary arrangements in place and expenditure decisions link well with the priorities for improvement and pupil wellbeing. Pupil outcomes are good. The school gives good value for money.

A report on Ysgol Tremeirchion  
November 2011

## Appendix 1

### Comments on performance data

In key stage 1 during two of the last five years, the percentage of pupils attaining level 2 (the expected level in Welsh, mathematics and science combined for seven year old pupils) has been in the top 25% when compared with local and national benchmarks and when compared with similar schools. During the remainder of that period performance has been in the lowest 50%.

Key stage 2 pupils' results in three of the last five years have been very positive with the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 or above (the expected level in Welsh/English, mathematics and science combined) in the top 25% when compared with national benchmarks and when compared with similar schools. However, only a very small proportion of pupils attain level 3 in key stage 1 and level 5 in key stage 2 during that period. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Since only a small number of pupils in both key stages were assessed at the end of the last academic year (2011), the school's performance cannot be compared with local and national benchmarks.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

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

##### Parent questionnaire

Twenty parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, which is approximately three quarters of the school's families. 18 of the questionnaires expressed complete satisfaction with the school with parents saying that:

- their child liked the school, was making good progress and had received good support to settle down when starting at school;
- pupils' behaviour was good, that they were expected to work hard and that they were respected by staff;
- teaching was good with the school helping their child to mature and to accept responsibilities;
- the school was well run and that parents received regular information about their child's progress ; and that
- children were prepared well for moving on to the secondary school.

A very small number of parents felt that they were uncertain of the school's expectations regarding homework

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

##### Pupil questionnaire

Most of the twenty pupil questionnaires that were completed expressed very positive aspects about the school. Pupils stated that they:

- feel safe in the school and knew with whom to speak if they were worried;
- have many opportunities to have regular physical exercise and were taught to be healthy; and that they
- receive good support from staff to help them to learn and that they were doing well in school.

Some learners were of the opinion that not all pupils behaved well during lunch times and play times and that homework did not help them to understand and improve their work in school.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Mr W Williams	Reporting Inspector
Mrs H Hughes	Team Inspector
Mr K Jones	Lay Inspector
Mr E. L. Watkins	Peer Inspector
Mr Gethin Jones	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