



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

**Rhewl C.P. School
Rhewl
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 2TU**

Date of inspection: May 2011

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

Ysgol y Rhewl primary school is located in the small village of Rhewl near Ruthin in Denbighshire. It provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age. The intake of pupils represents the full ability range.

All pupils come from homes where English is the main language. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils are taught mainly through the medium of English and learn Welsh as a second language. However, the school is a designated bilingual school, which caters for both English and Welsh medium education according to demand.

There are 34 full time pupils on roll and a further four children attend the nursery part-time. Since the relocation of the village playgroup, the school also admits pre-nursery children. This provision, 'Pili Pala', is delivered in the Foundation Phase classroom and includes children from other areas locally where this provision is not available.

There has been an increase in the number of pupils entitled to free school meals over the past three years. The current figure is about 26% of pupils, which is higher than the all-Wales average of just under 20% for primary schools.

The school has identified nearly a third of pupils as having additional learning needs. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The current headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol y Rhewl primary school is £4,574, which compares with a maximum of £18,610 and a minimum of £2,626 for primary schools in Denbighshire. The school has the 14th highest budget per pupil out of the 53 primary schools in Denbighshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

Overall performance is good because of:

- the school's inclusive ethos and the warm and friendly school community;
- pupils' good standards of achievement and their ability to use skills in their work across the curriculum;
- a good range of learning activities that captures and sustains the interest of pupils;
- high levels of attendance and behaviour, with pupils applying themselves well to learning;
- the way the school successfully promotes pupils' wellbeing; and
- effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress and the quality of provision for pupils in need of additional support, especially in literacy.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because of:

- a good track record in ensuring improved outcomes for pupils;
- the clear commitment to continuous improvement in provision and outcomes;
- a clear understanding of aspects of provision in need of further development and the willingness to take account of the views of governors, parents and pupils;
- a well-structured school development plan that identifies clear and appropriate proposals for school development;
- the way the school's governing body acts as a critical friend; and
- a commitment to working in partnership with other local schools as a professional learning community.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 ensure that learning activities extend pupils of all abilities in mainstream classes, especially pupils of higher ability in key stage 2;
- R2 improve pupils' understanding of what to do to improve the quality of their work, especially the quality of marking and pupils' involvement in self and peer assessment;
- R3 further develop the planning and implementation of the provision for skills, to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' skill development; and
- R4 improve senior management's role in evaluating continuity and progression in provision and pupils' achievements across the school.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

At key stage 1, the school's performance generally compares favourably with that of other schools in the family and with that of similar schools nationally in terms of the levels of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level (level 3) is higher than the average for similar schools in mathematics, but no pupils have gained the higher level in science or English in the last three years.

At key stage 2, performance in many indicators has placed the school in the top 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals in three of the last four years. Performance is generally significantly higher than the average for schools in the family. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels (level 5 or above) compares very favourably with percentage levels in similar schools.

The performance of boys is generally similar to that of girls, other than in English at key stage 1 where boys perform less well. There is no pattern of under-achievement by pupils entitled to free school meals. Pupils with additional learning needs make the expected progress in relation to their individual targets. Most make significant progress in terms of improved reading ages.

In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievements in speaking and listening, reading and writing generally compare favourably with achievement levels in other similar schools. In lessons, pupils willingly offer responses and develop confidence in speaking. Pupils read aloud texts fluently and meaningfully and develop as competent readers. Key stage 1 pupils make the expected progress in the ability to write in their own words, showing an increasing grasp of basic punctuation. By the end of key stage 2, pupils write at length in their own words for a range of purposes. They use paragraphs and punctuation effectively, and use re-drafting skills to improve their work. Pupils' fictional writing is interesting and imaginative.

Foundation Phase children develop increasingly as independent learners. However, at times, they do not make enough use of investigation to develop their thinking and sustain their learning. Key stage 2 pupils make good use of information and communication technology to select text and use different software for giving presentations on topics, for example in their work relating to the Second World War. More able pupils in key stage 2 do not always achieve as well as they are capable of in lessons.

Pupils are able to understand and follow the increasing use of Welsh as a means of communication as they progress through the school. In the Foundation class in particular, pupils are beginning to make spontaneous use of Welsh. By the end of key stage 2, pupils are able to link a sequence of sentences to convey personal information. Children in the Foundation Phase write words and basic sentences in Welsh, although their grasp of sentence constructions is sometimes not as secure at

is could be. At key stage 2, pupils acquire an increasing range of Welsh sentence patterns and vocabulary and use them with a good degree of accuracy. Progress in the ability to link different sentence patterns in more extended writing is less evident.

In a number of instances, pupils have gone on to join the bilingual stream at Ysgol Brynhyfryd as a result of their progress in Welsh by the end of key stage 2. The small number of pupils assessed in Welsh first language over recent years generally achieve well at the end of key stage 2.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils feel safe at school and are aware of the school's procedures for identifying and dealing with incidents of bullying. They approach adults at the school with confidence for support and guidance.

As a result of initiatives such as 'Heartstart', and 'Dangerpoint', pupils have a good awareness of how to keep safe and healthy. For example, pupils of all ages have a good awareness of the importance of regularly cleaning their teeth as part of a Designed to Smile scheme. Good numbers participate in sports activities.

Standards of behaviour are good in classes and around the school. Pupils relate well to each other and to staff and enjoy their learning. In classes, pupils are eager and generally apply themselves well to learning, and persevere to achieve lesson objectives. Attendance levels are high, and have consistently been very near to or amongst the top 25% of those for similar schools.

Involvement with the school council effectively promotes pupils' contribution to the life and work of the school and their ability to contribute to decision-making. This includes arranging pupil questionnaires and presenting the results to the governing body, and making suggestions that have been well received by the school.

Pupils show respect, care and concern for others. They have close links with the local community, distribute vegetable bags to elderly residents of the village and participate regularly in local sports and social events. Pupils co-operate well with each other and are confident when interacting with adults.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum provides pupils with a suitable range of interesting learning activities that captures and sustains their participation in learning. Joint planning of learning experiences ensures a balanced curriculum across the school.

Opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills have been incorporated into schemes of work. Planning to ensure progression in pupils' skills development has not yet fully impacted on pupils' learning experiences in classes. There is good use of information and communication technology to develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

Extensive use is made of Welsh as a medium of basic communication with pupils. Initiatives such as the 'Detectif Cymraeg' and 'Talking Partners' are helping pupils to practice and use what they have learnt in lessons. The school makes appropriate provision, as required, for pupils from Welsh-speaking backgrounds.

The school actively promotes pupils' understanding of sustainability and eco issues. Projects have been incorporated in the day-to-day life of the school. Planning and provision for the development of global citizenship are at an early stage of development.

Pupils' experiences are enriched by speakers that visit the school to talk about their work, memories and hobbies. Pupils enjoy and appreciate after school clubs that are well attended. The community partnership project to develop the school garden has provided pupils with a wide range of stimulating learning experiences.

Pupils have good opportunities to learn about the local environment, including local history and folklore. They visit Glan-llyn and have opportunities to take part in local eisteddfodau.

Teaching: Good

Teachers establish good working relationships with pupils. They plan lessons effectively and use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage pupils. Lessons are lively and many activities ensure appropriate progression in pupils' learning. Teachers use language and questions effectively. On occasions, especially at key stage 2, the work is not matched closely enough to the range of ability, which results in pupils not being fully engaged in learning or achieving their full potential.

Generally, the school makes appropriate use of assessment information to track pupils' progress. Individual targets are set for pupils, and these are tracked effectively to monitor progress and provide additional support when required. This is having a significant impact on pupils' progress.

Pupils' written work is marked regularly and teachers' comments acknowledge effort and offer encouragement. However, only in a minority of instances do pupils receive useful comments identifying what they need to do to improve their work. There are inconsistencies between classes in the opportunities for pupils to engage in assessing their own work and that of their peers.

End of year reports are clear and informative. They involve pupils and parents to good effect in identifying areas for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show an awareness of the needs of others by collecting regularly for good causes. Parents strongly praise the values promoted by the school.

The school is involved in a number of initiatives to promote pupils' health and wellbeing. These include initiatives such as 'Smokebugs' and 'Don't touch, tell'.

Pupils' progress, wellbeing and behaviour are managed effectively with good support from classroom assistants. The assertive discipline policy has a positive impact on standards of behaviour across the school. Pupils respond well to the rewards system. There is careful and supportive adult supervision at playtime. The school has links with a number of other agencies that ensure effective support for pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The school caters effectively for pupils with additional needs through the 'Booster group' provision. There are appropriate procedures for identifying pupils in need of additional support for speech and language. These pupils receive good support from the school's trained teaching assistants. The 'Catch-up' scheme has had a positive impact on standards in reading.

The school works closely with parents and outside agencies in relation to pupils with special educational needs. Individual educational plans are detailed and reviewed on a regular basis. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress.

The school has begun to develop its provision for more able and talented pupils.

Learning environment: Good

The inclusive ethos and the supportive environment are strong features of the school. The school ensures equal opportunities for every pupil and promotes positive attitudes to diversity.

Classrooms are spacious and the open plan layout of both infant and junior classes creates a pleasant and stimulating learning environment. Colourful displays support teaching and learning.

The building and school grounds are generally in good condition and well maintained. The inspection team has written to the governing body and the local authority relating to the condition of an external wall.

The school makes regular use of nearby facilities for sports activities and physical education. It has enough equipment and resources to support all aspects of the curriculum.

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 and has shared this with all staff and governors. Initiatives to improve aspects of provision have had a significant impact on pupils' achievements and wellbeing. The priorities of the school development plan are regularly reviewed and evaluated in staff and governing body meetings. Effective teamwork and good communication at all levels are prominent

features. The school has developed positive relationships with parents and others in the community and is responsive to their views.

There are appropriate systems in place for the performance management of teaching staff with plans to extend this to other members of the school's staff in the near future.

The school's governing body is supportive of the school, and is fully involved in strategic planning. The governing body is involved in the self-evaluation process and challenges the school where appropriate. Governors make use of the core data sets to monitor how well the school is performing in comparison with similar schools. Governors also visit the school regularly in relation to their allocated responsibilities.

National and local priorities receive appropriate attention, for example arrangements for the effective transition between the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. The school intends to share this work with the other schools in the same cluster. Improving provision for pupils' Welsh language development is also being addressed appropriately.

Improving quality: Good

There are appropriate procedures in place for self-evaluation that include a review of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, and the analysis of data. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching through lesson observations and the school consults with parents and pupils to gain their views.

Generally, self-evaluation is sound, although there are some aspects of provision where there is insufficient detail to inform development planning fully. The school development plan is thorough and well-structured. It identifies clear objectives, suitable timescales, and the resources required to undertake the actions over a three year period.

Recommendations arising from the last inspection have been fully addressed.

Teaching staff have appropriate responsibilities for contributing to an evaluation of the school's effectiveness in meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum.

The school is fully committed to continuous improvement and to working in partnership with other local schools as a professional learning community. Current initiatives include raising standards of literacy and numeracy of more able and talented pupils.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners.

Parents have good opportunities to offer their views on aspects of provision and support and are comfortable in approaching the school with queries or concerns.

Joint activities with local schools include the moderation and standardisation of

teacher assessment of pupils' work and exchange visits to observe teaching and learning. The school works closely with Ysgol Brynhyfryd as part of the transition plan.

The school works well with a wide range of community partners, including the local authority, police, the local church and employers. It has made effective use of a community focussed school grant to set up a homework club. It has also improved facilities for out of school hours community learning in conjunction with Coleg Llandrillo.

Resource management: Good

The school makes extensive use of support staff to provide effective additional support for individuals and groups of pupils. It deploys staff in a way that makes the best use of their time, expertise and experience. The school meets the requirements of the workload agreement. Resources are allocated appropriately.

The headteacher, with good support from the governing body, monitors the budget carefully. School development plan objectives are costed and funding sources are clearly identified. The school has successfully addressed a considerable reduction in the school budget for the current financial year.
The school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fifteen parents or carers completed the questionnaire. They expressed high levels of satisfaction. Almost without exception, parents and carers indicated they are happy or very happy with all aspects of the life and work of the school.

Almost all parents or carers say that they strongly agree that their children have settled in well in the school and are making good progress. Almost all also say that they strongly agree that teaching is good and that their children receive a high level of support and that their children are treated fairly and with respect. They strongly agree that the school is well run and that they find staff approachable if they have any questions or concerns.

Responses to learner questionnaires

All pupils in key stage 2 (13 pupils) completed the learner questionnaire. There were no responses to any of the questions that indicated that pupils had concerns about any aspect of the life and work of the school.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Iolo Dafydd	Reporting Inspector
Ray Owen	Team Inspector
Richard John Roberts	Lay Inspector
Rhys Hughes	Peer Inspector
Tania Armstrong Owen	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