



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 Yr Esgob
Lon-yr-ysgol
Caerwys
Mold
CH7 5AD**

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 yr Esgob Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated in Caerwys, a small town in rural Flintshire. Most pupils reside locally with a few pupils coming from the surrounding area. The school admits pupils to the nursery at the age of three.

There are currently 64 full-time and nine part-time pupils on roll. Pupils are taught by three full-time and three part-time teachers in four mixed-age classes. In addition, there are one part-time and two full-time members of support staff.

Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. The school describes the area it serves as generally advantaged. Currently, approximately 6% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is significantly lower than local and national averages. There is one pupil "looked after" by the local authority. Around 19% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs, and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. English is the predominant home language for all pupils. No pupils come from Welsh speaking homes.

The headteacher was appointed in 2004. One teacher has been absent from school for a long period. The Chair of Governors has been in post for less than a year.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Yr Esgob is £3,649, which compares with a maximum of £7,635 and a minimum of £2,660 for primary schools in Flintshire. The school has the 14th highest budget per pupil out of the 74 primary schools in Flintshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall judgement for the current performance of the provider is unsatisfactory because:

- trends over the last four years show that the school is performing less well than similar schools;
- pupils' standards are unsatisfactory in important areas;
- staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve;
- end of key stage assessments are insecure; and
- the school does not fully meet statutory requirements.

Prospects for improvement

The overall judgement for the prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory because:

- leaders and managers do not give the school strategic direction;
- leaders and managers do not rigorously challenge underperformance;
- self-evaluation is underdeveloped; and
- the school has not yet met all the recommendations of the last report.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards, especially in Welsh and science;
- R2 improve pupils' key skills in writing, reading and numeracy in key stage 2;
- R3 develop effective planning and teaching strategies to provide appropriate challenge to all pupils;
- R4 improve strategic leadership so that leaders and managers at all levels rigorously challenge underperformance;
- R5 establish a rigorous system of self-evaluation for both learning and teaching that draws on regular quality assurance processes;
- R6 improve the moderation and accuracy of end of key stage assessments;
- R7 ensure that the school meets statutory requirements in respect of performance management and the National Agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' (January 2003); and
- R8 address the wellbeing issues discussed in the feedback meeting at the end of the inspection.

What happens next?

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Unsatisfactory

Standards: Unsatisfactory

Most pupils enter school with levels of skills that are about those expected for their age. Their progress is uneven as they move through the school. In the nursery/reception class, most pupils make strong progress and do well. This rapid progress is not maintained in the Year 1/2 class and beyond. By the end of key stage 2, although standards are good in mathematics they are unsatisfactory in many other areas, especially Welsh and science. Generally, pupils in Ysgol Yr Esgob perform less well compared to pupils of other schools in the local authority and in Wales.

In lessons and in their work, standards achieved by nursery/reception class pupils are good. They communicate their needs and feelings well and can use their written work to organise their ideas. Older pupils in the Foundation Phase make limited progress in comparison to younger pupils and few demonstrate any aspects of higher levels of writing.

Scrutiny of pupils' work in key stage 2 shows that most pupils do not write well. Their presentation and spelling are unsatisfactory and sentence construction is underdeveloped. There is little evidence of pupils writing effectively for different audiences and purposes or with an appropriate choice of vocabulary. Few pupils proof read, edit or revise their work suitably. Many fail to make the expected progress. This impacts negatively on the standards pupils achieve in other subjects.

Many younger pupils read well for their age and ability. They read accurately and with confidence. Older pupils do not read with sufficient expression and have not developed higher order reading skills such as use of inference or deduction. Not all of these pupils use an index page correctly.

Most pupils listen well and take interest in other pupils' points of view. Many speak confidently in front of others and a few use a very mature vocabulary.

Pupils' numeracy skills are appropriate to their age and ability in the Foundation Phase, but in key stage 2 are underdeveloped. Pupils rarely use their skills in other subjects and therefore make little progress. Pupils use information and communication technology well in different areas of the curriculum, including controllable models in the Foundation Phase. Older pupils use email successfully to contact pen-pals in the USA and Eire.

By the time they leave the school, nearly all pupils have unsatisfactory standards in Welsh language skills. Older pupils' writing skills are weak and there is little progress made from work in key stage 1.

Teacher assessment results at the end of both key stages have to be treated with caution. The comparatively small cohorts and the relatively high percentage of pupils

with special educational needs influence the performance of the school in some years. The differences in the performance of boys and girls and the standards achieved by pupils entitled to free school meals are not significant due to very small numbers.

Over the last four years, teachers' assessment results for the expected level 2 or above in key stage 1 have been just below the family (schools which face similar challenges) average in English and well below in mathematics. The trend has been well above the family average in science. The core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in English, mathematics and science in combination) is at the family average. In 2010, when compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, Ysgol yr Esgob was in the lowest 25% for the core subject indicator, English and mathematics, and in the top 25% for science.

Attainment in key stage 2 for the expected level 4 or above over the last four years has been below that of the family. Compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, Yr Esgob has generally been in the lowest 25% of similar schools for the core subject indicator, English and mathematics. However, for the last three years it has been in the highest 25% for science. Evidence of pupils' current work in science is not as good.

Overall, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in key stage 1 assessments has been regularly below that of the family. In key stage 2 it has been generally around the family average.

Data identifies that overall standards in skills in key stage 1 are falling and are at or just below the family average. In key stage 2, writing is improving and trends overall are slightly better than those of the family. The school's data indicates that many pupils make the appropriate progress during key stage 2, including those with additional learning needs.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Many pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They try hard in lessons and generally are attentive. Nearly all behave well. They are courteous and friendly and show care and concern for others. Almost all pupils say that they feel safe in school. Little bullying occurs and staff deal with occasional incidences promptly.

Many pupils have an appropriate understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They know the reasons for eating healthily and participate in the appropriate range of physical activities on offer to them. They recognise the harmful effects of particular substances on the body. Many pupils work well in groups or teams but their skills of independent learning are not well developed. They are not regularly involved in contributing to planning what they learn.

The school council plays a small part in the life of the school. Whilst pupils involved are confident their voice is being heard they have not made significant contributions to decision-making in the school. Recent developments include organising a pupil questionnaire that resulted in minor improvements to lunchtime arrangements and organising charity events.

Many pupils take an active part in community events including contributing articles for the community newspaper, recycling events, sporting festivals and Christmas activities.

Pupils' attendance is currently just above the all Wales average. It is improving and is in the top 25% when compared to that of similar schools. Most pupils are punctual.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Unsatisfactory

Learning experiences: Unsatisfactory

Overall, the curriculum fails to provide a range of experiences that meet the needs of all pupils.

Provision for the Foundation Phase has developed well in the nursery/reception class where teaching and support staff collaborate well to plan lessons. The Foundation Phase is less well embedded in Year 1 and Year 2. Across the school, good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their listening, oracy and information and communication technology skills.

Schemes of work are in place but do not always provide appropriate support and guidance for staff to be able to plan and deliver learning experiences effectively. They do not always address all the requirements of the National Curriculum and there is a lack of emphasis on systematically developing pupils' numeracy, writing and higher order reading skills.

Teachers' daily lesson plans do not consistently target the needs of all pupils. Learning objectives are unclear. As a result, pupils are sometimes unsure of what they need to achieve, and staff are not always able to assess pupils' progress clearly or identify what pupils need to do next. Staff do not challenge pupils well enough, especially the more able, or have high enough expectations of what they can achieve. There are limited opportunities for pupils to be involved in learning independently. These important shortcomings prevent pupils from making sufficient progress across many areas of the curriculum.

Other than in the nursery/reception class, provision for Welsh language development is unsatisfactory. Learning experiences do not effectively build on what pupils already know. There is little use of incidental Welsh by staff and too often pupils are required to complete low level tasks. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Welsh culture is developed through the annual school Eisteddfod and links to local festivals and events.

The school provides a suitable range of educational visits and trips to support the taught curriculum. Many pupils in key stage 2 benefit socially and culturally by opportunities to go on residential visits.

The school has been successful in developing its provision for sustainable development and global citizenship. It has achieved the eco schools bronze award and formed good links with schools in Eire, USA and Sri Lanka.

Teaching: Unsatisfactory

In almost all lessons, teachers have good working relationships with pupils, create a calm working atmosphere and manage behaviour well. In the nursery/reception class, staff ensure that activities are at an appropriate level for pupils. They track pupil progress well.

In other classes, the majority of teaching is less effective. Teachers do not expect enough of pupils, they plan low-level learning activities, the pace of lessons is too slow and pupils' underperformance is not challenged rigorously. In most lessons, staff do not focus well enough on improving pupils' skills of reading, writing and numeracy. These shortcomings impede pupils' progress and impact negatively on the standards they achieve in many areas.

Teachers do not consistently mark pupils' work well enough to raise standards. The marking provides pupils with too little effective feedback. As a result, pupils do not know what they need to do next to improve. The school's tracking system is used well to identify additional support for pupils but does not sufficiently inform teachers' planning. Consequently, staff do not always focus clearly enough on what needs to be done next to raise standards.

Moderation of pupils' work lacks rigour and end of key stage assessments are insecure.

Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

All members of staff make sure that pupils feel safe in school. They successfully encourage pupils to show tolerance and respect for each other and promote healthy living well.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. All older pupils have the opportunity to visit Eire and to learn to play an instrument.

The school prospectus provides parents with useful information about the life of the school.

Generally, there is appropriate support for pupils with additional learning needs when they are withdrawn from the classroom. However, this support is not always reinforced in lessons.

There are effective links to specialist services and agencies and appropriate procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with additional learning needs. Individual education plans are prepared for these pupils and are regularly reviewed. However, parents are not always involved in the process and some have not signed their child's plan.

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

Learning environment: Adequate

The school is an inclusive community that promotes respect and diversity. The parents appreciate the sense of care, inclusion and belonging that exists.

The school is generally colourful and attractive although some areas are untidy and cluttered. The school building and grounds are well maintained. Staff do not yet use the spacious grounds sufficiently well to enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Resources are satisfactory. They are suitably matched to pupils' learning needs.

Two issues relating to pupils' wellbeing were brought to the attention of the governing body.

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

The headteacher was appointed to the school shortly before the previous inspection in 2005. He has succeeded in establishing a caring ethos where children are happy in their work. Strategic management is less effective. Delegation of responsibilities to staff in order to monitor and evaluate plans to improve outcomes and the quality of provision for learners is unsatisfactory. Leaders and managers provide insufficient challenge to underperformance.

About half of the governing body are new since September 2010. Some members have recently accessed training from the local authority to develop an understanding of their role. Currently, governors do not use data and other sources of evidence effectively enough to challenge the school to bring about improvement.

The arrangements for performance management do not always comply with statutory requirements. The roles and responsibilities expected from staff are not always well defined and mutually agreed. Although appropriate targets have been set in line with personal development needs, these are insufficiently aligned to whole-school development needs. Provision for planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers is inconsistent between individuals and does not meet statutory requirements.

The school is making appropriate progress in meeting some national and local priorities, for example the Foundation Phase. Progress is less effective in promoting pupils' Welsh language development and fostering bilingualism.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

Self-evaluation processes lack rigour. There are weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' standards and in the quality of provision.

Analyses of the outcomes of end of key stage teacher assessments or the school's pupil tracking system are not used effectively enough to identify appropriate strategies and targets for improvement. The school has failed to act appropriately on

advice from the local authority relating to important shortcomings in leadership and management. Evaluation of the effectiveness of previous school improvement plans is inadequate. The school fails to identify the impact of actions undertaken to set new targets for improvement. Insufficient progress has been made in implementing most of the recommendations from the previous inspection in 2005.

Collaboration with other schools as professional learning communities is well developed in respect of the Foundation Phase, the school being part of the pilot programme for evaluating the implementation of the School Effectiveness Framework. Visits to other schools to observe best practice have yet to impact significantly on improving the teaching and learning within the school.

Partnership working: Adequate

Partnerships with parents, the local community, the Church and others such as the local playgroup are well established. Visitors from the community and visits in the locality and further afield, including a residential visit, help to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of contrasting cultures and localities.

Parents report positively on induction procedures. Transition arrangements with local high schools enable pupils to prepare well for the next step in their education. Partnership working to verify the accuracy of the levels awarded to pupils in end of key stage 2 assessments is undeveloped.

Resource management: Unsatisfactory

Weaknesses in the management of staff and resources and in monitoring the school's spending has led to a deficit budget necessitating restructuring in staffing. Insufficient account has been taken over the last few years of the local authority's budget projections and its implications regarding current staffing levels. As a result, school priorities and spending decisions are not linked together effectively enough.

There are shortcomings in the deployment of teaching staff to ensure that good use is made of their time, expertise and experience in contributing to the process of school improvement.

Weakness in improving pupil outcomes, provision, teaching and in the quality of leadership and management including financial management results in the school providing unsatisfactory value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Twenty-three key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. Nearly all responded very positively about the school, feeling safe, secure and well cared for. There was very high agreement from the pupils that they were doing well; that staff helped them to make progress; that there was someone to ask if they were stuck or needed help; and that they had lots of opportunities to take exercise.

Most pupils felt that homework was supportive; that they had enough resources to do their work; and that other pupils were well behaved in class and at break times.

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twelve parents responded to the questionnaires.

Most thought that:

- their child settled well into school;
- teaching was good;
- staff expected their child to work hard;
- their child was safe in school;
- they were comfortable approaching the school with any issues;
- the school developed their child's sense of responsibility well; and
- their child was well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Many parents were satisfied with the school and believed that:

- their child liked school;
- their child was making good progress;
- their child was treated with respect by staff;
- they were kept well informed;
- the school had a good range of trips and visits; and
- the school is well run.

A minority of parents were concerned about;

- pupils' behaviour;
- the appropriateness of support for children with additional learning needs; and
- the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Rick Hawkley	Reporting Inspector
Jeff Jones	Team Inspector
Duncan Hawarth	Lay Inspector
Julia Buckley-Jones	Peer Inspector
Anthony Allen (Headteacher)	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