



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
LL15 2TU**

Date of inspection: September 2017

by

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

About Rhewl C.P. School

Rhewl County Primary School is in the village of Rhewl near Ruthin in Denbighshire. There are currently 24 pupils on roll, aged between 3 and 11 years of age, many of whom come from the village and surrounding area. Pupil numbers have decreased significantly over the last two years, due to the prospect of its closure in July 2018, a year later than originally planned.

There are two mixed-age classes one for foundation phase pupils and the other for key stage 2 pupils.

Pupils are taught mainly through the medium of English. However, the school is classified as a designated bilingual school, which should cater for both English and Welsh medium pupils, according to demand. Around 16% of pupils speak Welsh at home. The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is around 10%, which is below the national average of 19%. The school has identified very few of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is significantly lower than the national average.

The acting headteacher took up her post in September 2017. The school was last inspected in May 2011.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The school is a caring community that nurtures pupils' personal and social skills well. Many of the school's pupils make good progress from their starting point. Most pupils behave well and generally have a positive attitude to their work. However, pupils are not fully involved in making decisions about the life and the work of the school. By key stage 2, most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their speaking and listening skills, but their reading skills are not as strong.

Teachers plan stimulating and engaging learning experiences for pupils. However, these plans are not always robust enough to ensure that pupils always develop their numeracy skills well enough in a range of contexts.

The acting headteacher has worked conscientiously and enthusiastically with staff in the short time that she has been at the school. She has a clear sense of purpose, based creating a caring, inclusive community for all pupils. However, although the school's strategic planning does have many strengths, there continues to be important aspects that need improving, for example ensuring that teachers' feedback to pupils is effective enough to enable them to improve their work.

| Inspection area | Judgement |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Standards | Adequate and needs improvement |
| Wellbeing and attitudes to learning | Adequate and needs improvement |
| Teaching and learning experiences | Adequate and needs improvement |
| Care, support and guidance | Good |
| Leadership and management | Adequate and needs improvement |

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' reading and skills
- R2 Ensure that self-evaluation and development planning processes are robust enough to enable leaders to identify the correct priorities for improvement
- R3 Refine teachers' written feedback so that it enables pupils to understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work
- R4 Ensure that teachers' planning enables pupils to develop their numeracy skills progressively across the curriculum

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the school's progress.

Main findings

Standards: Adequate and needs improvement

The standard of pupils' language and mathematical skills when they start school varies year on year. However, many pupils make suitable progress as they move through the school and achieve at least the expected level by the end of key stage 2. As the school has a small number of pupils in each year group, it is difficult to compare the progress of specific groups of pupils. The very few pupils with additional learning needs, however, make appropriate progress against their targets from their individual starting points.

In the foundation phase, many pupils develop appropriate speaking skills for example, when they describe how they organised a class picnic on the moon as part of their topic work. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills and use these effectively in relation to their topic about the Second World War. In the foundation phase, many develop their reading skills appropriately. However, a minority do not identify letters and sounds confidently and use limited strategies to read unfamiliar words. As they move through key stage 2, although most pupils gather information from a range of sources and present their findings in a variety of ways, many make limited progress in their reading. They lack fluency and expression, and show little enthusiasm when reading.

Many foundation phase pupils develop their ideas suitably within a limited range of genres. They write short phrases and sentences effectively in English, for example when writing a recount about their weekend. However, pupils do not write independently enough at length. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils write confidently in a range of styles and organise their writing effectively to suit different audiences in English. They have a sound understanding of punctuation and use appropriate vocabulary to enhance their writing. Many continue to develop their writing skills well in other subjects across the curriculum. For example, when writing a newspaper article about saving the rainforest. However, more able pupils do not write extensively enough to a suitable standard. They do not use a wide enough variety of sentence structures or extended vocabulary in their writing.

In the foundation phase, most pupils show enthusiasm towards the Welsh language. They respond appropriately to basic phrases and instructions in Welsh. Most pupils use specific Welsh vocabulary well when discussing the planets as part of their class topic. As they move through key stage 2, pupils' Welsh oracy skills are less well-developed. A majority of pupils engage in basic conversations when talking about their hobbies, and by the end of Year 6, a majority can write a series of well-structured sentences in Welsh using a variety of verbs purposefully, for example, when writing instructions on how to make apple crumble.

At the upper end of foundation phase, many pupils have a sound understanding of numbers up to 100, and a few of the more able describe the difference between odd and even numbers confidently. With support, many collate data from a scientific investigation about keeping a liquid warm, and record their findings appropriately on a line graph. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils compare fractions accurately and calculate percentages confidently. Many analyse simple data appropriately and

represent their findings in a variety of graphs such as when comparing the weather in Rhewl and in the rainforest. However, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills consistently across the curriculum at either key stage.

A majority of pupils develop their Information communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately. In the foundation phase, they use an appropriate range of programmes, for example a graphic and word programme to present their ideas. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils use ICT packages confidently to make presentations. They use spreadsheets and databases appropriately within their topic work. Most pupils use the internet confidently to search for information relevant to their topic.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know who to approach for support if they have any concerns. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. Most have a secure understanding of issues which affect their health and wellbeing. They understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and the need to take regular exercise. Nearly all pupils take part regularly in physical activities and a minority attend extra-curricular sports activities which promote their fitness effectively. For example, the 'mile run' and weekly gymnastic sessions.

Most pupils behave well in class and at other times during the day. They generally, have a positive attitude to their work and show consideration towards others. The playground buddies strategy supports this aspect well. However, pupils are not fully involved in making decisions about the life and the work of the school. In key stage 2, most pupils, concentrate well in lessons and engage positively in their tasks. They work diligently in groups when presented with problem solving activities, such as when planning a visit to Jodrell Bank as part of their topic work. They support each other well and take into account other pupils' ideas and opinions. However, a few pupils in the foundation phase lack focus and concentration, and rely heavily on adult support. Overall, pupils across the school have a limited understanding of how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve their work.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The standard of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. All teachers have up to date professional knowledge and plan stimulating and engaging learning experiences for pupils. Lessons build well on pupils' prior learning and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding suitably. Teachers generally ask a good range of open questions that enhance pupils' learning well. Overall, pupils respond well to these questions and many make appropriate progress in their tasks. Where teaching is less effective, the tasks do not challenge a very few more able pupils well enough, or provide regular opportunities for them to develop fully as independent learners. As a result, a few of the younger pupils become over reliant on support from adults and make limited progress.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly using a range of relevant assessments and use this information suitably to identify appropriate support for most pupils. They often provide pupils with positive oral feedback on what they have done well. However, in a few instances, written feedback is not always clear enough to help them understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Teachers plan a wide range of learning experiences that engages nearly all pupils well. In the foundation phase, focus activities led by staff, pays suitable attention to developing pupils' skills. This is reinforced by a range of purposeful enhanced and continuous learning activities. Although whole-school planning takes account of the literacy and numeracy framework and the requirements for teaching ICT, It doesn't always ensure clear progression. As a result, pupils' numeracy skills in different contexts is often underdeveloped.

The school promotes the Welsh language and the Welsh dimension well. Staff work diligently to encourage pupils to use the Welsh language during formal and informal activities. As a result, many pupils are acquiring a secure grasp of basic language patterns and vocabulary. The school ensures that pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about their locality, and the history and culture of Wales through the curriculum, and by taking part in a variety of interesting visits and activities within the community.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community that nurtures pupils' personal and social skills well. Through the curriculum, daily routines, circle time and acts of collective worship, the school promotes pupils' understanding of values such as honesty, tolerance and equality effectively. The school's code of conduct successfully promotes good behaviour and all pupils value the weekly 'Citizenship Award'. A particularly strong feature of the school's work is the caring attitudes that older pupils demonstrate towards the younger ones.

Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. The school's personal and social education programme contributes well to developing these aspects. The school is an integral part of the community with pupils participating in many community activities including eisteddfodau. This promotes their social and life skills successfully.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and regular exercise. Staff know their pupils well, and respond sensitively to their social and emotional needs. The ethos of the school is an open, caring environment where pupils are encouraged to discuss any problems with staff. There is suitable provision to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school has a good relationship with parents and has established effective lines of communication to keep them informed about the work of the school. This encourages them to be actively involved in their children's education. By accommodating the local playgroup within the building, staff ensure that pupils have a smooth transition when they start school.

The acting headteacher has recently developed a more robust monitoring and tracking process that enable staff to measure pupil progress more systematically. However it is too early to measure its impact on provision and pupil outcomes.

The school has appropriate provision for pupils with additional learning needs, however, formal processes to identify these individuals at an early stage, are not

always systematic. Individual education plans are in place, with learning support assistants being suitably deployed to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, most pupils make the expected progress towards achieving the individual targets set for them. More recently, pupils have greater involvement in the process of setting their own targets and reviewing progress.

Leadership and management: Adequate and needs improvement

The acting headteacher, staff and governors share a common purpose for their work, and succeed in creating a caring, inclusive community for all pupils. The welfare and wellbeing of its pupils is one of the school's central aims. Since the start of this academic year, there has been more of a focus on collaborative working and accountability by all stakeholders. This is beginning to have a positive effect on improving provision and pupil outcomes.

Members of the governing body are supportive of the school. They visit the school regularly, meet as a body, receive appropriate reports from the headteacher, review financial matters purposefully and take part in monitoring processes. However, they do not have a clear enough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and hence, their role in the strategic direction of the school is limited.

The school's self-evaluation report identifies many strengths and areas for improvement. However, in places, the report is often descriptive and lacks sufficient analysis and evaluation. The link between the outcomes of self-evaluation and planning the school's development is not fully embedded. Although leaders monitor the work of the school suitably through book scrutiny and lesson observations, they do not always use the information well enough to secure improvements and address important issues such as developing pupils as independent learners and the quality of teacher feedback. The new acting headteacher has recently developed a more evaluative document which identifies strengths and areas for improvement more robustly. This document focuses clearly on improving provision and pupil outcomes.

The school manages its budget appropriately. Expenditure decisions link effectively to the priorities for improvement. Overall, the school has adequate resources to meet pupils' learning needs and curriculum requirements. Following recent monitoring of standards, members of staff recognise the need for new reading material for reluctant readers, however it is too early to measure its effect on pupils' enjoyment and standards in reading. The pupil development grant is used suitably to target the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals, however, leaders do not monitor the the impact of this support well enough.

The acting headteacher has begun to review whole-school leadership responsibilities as a basis for developing curriculum planning and ensuring effective accountability. Staff have suitable opportunities to improve their skills and professional knowledge through, for example, collaborating with another local school to develop mathematical and spelling activities for pupils. The outcome of this initiative is yet to impact fully on the school's provision and standards that pupils achieve.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

| | |
|--|--|
| Excellent | Very strong, sustained performance and practice |
| Good | Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement |
| Adequate and needs improvement | Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement |
| Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement | Important weaknesses outweigh strengths |

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2017: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 27/11/2017