



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 Hooson
Heol Caradoc
Rhosllanerchrugog
Wrexham
LL14 2DN**

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 ID Hooson is a designated bilingual primary school. The school is situated in the village of Rhosllanerchrugog and is maintained by Wrexham local authority. At present, there are a total of 269 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on the school register, including 45 nursery age children who were admitted in the September following their third birthday. The number of pupils has increased significantly since the last inspection and this increase is predicted to continue into the future.

The school moved to a new site and building in September 2007 and a new headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

Thirty-one per cent of pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language and the remainder come from homes where English is the main language of communication. Welsh is the school's main medium of communication and learning. A variety of social backgrounds are represented and a full range of abilities are reflected. Ten per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and this figure is lower than the county and national averages. Fifteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and four pupils are statemented.

The individual school budget per head in 2010-2011 for Ysgol Hooson is £3,248, compared to a maximum of £9,122 and a minimum of £2,734 for primary schools in Wrexham. The school's budget per pupil is the 32nd highest of the 62 primary schools in Wrexham.

The school was last inspected during the summer term 2005.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because:

- most pupils make sound progress during their time at the school and achieve good standards in key skills across the curriculum;
- it demonstrates success in developing bilingualism from an early age;
- the provision for pupils with additional learning needs is an excellent feature;
- it includes a wide range of experiences that reinforce and stimulate learning; and
- there is a caring Welsh ethos that ensures that almost all pupils enjoy learning and feel safe.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a very good knowledge of the school and a clear vision for developing the school in the future;
- the governors and management team work well in partnership with the headteacher to realise his vision; and
- the school has identified specific areas for development in the future that have already been implemented.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 ensure consistency in the provision for the most able pupils;
- R2 continue to improve pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage;
- R3 share good practice relating to teaching across the school; and
- R4 further develop the roles of the deputy and the management team in implementing strategies to raise pupils' standards.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to show how it will address these recommendations. The local authority will monitor the implementation of the plan and will report to Estyn on the school's efforts.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The local authority's data shows that the children's basic skills upon entering the nursery are lower than the authority level. The main reason for this is because the children are assessed through the medium of Welsh and, as approximately 70% are non-Welsh speakers on admission, the results are naturally low. However, foundation assessment results in the reception phase show a significant improvement over a short period of time, especially in oracy.

Almost all pupils throughout the school work diligently, complete their work effectively and show clear progress in the standard of what they achieve during learning sessions and over a period of time.

Most pupils listen attentively to teachers' presentations and to the contributions of their peers. Oracy standards are very good, with almost all pupils communicating confidently from an early age.

Most pupils' reading levels in both languages are appropriate to their age and ability. They read a wide range of materials fluently across the curriculum. Writing development in Welsh across Foundation Phase activities, and in both languages across the curricular areas in key stage 2, is good. However, occasionally, spelling errors appear in the work of a minority of pupils.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals, and pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), achieve well. However, the most able pupils underachieve in some areas at times.

Pupils who speak Welsh as a second language deal confidently with the Welsh language very quickly after starting at the school, and the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is core to the work and ethos of the school.

Average end of key stage 1 results for 2010 were higher than those of the authority and Wales in mathematics and the core subject indicator (the expected performance in Welsh or English, mathematics and science). The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level in Welsh was higher than the Welsh average, but lower than the average for the schools in the authority, and slightly lower than both the authority and Wales averages in science. This places the school among the lower 50% of similar schools, in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, in Welsh and mathematics, and among the bottom 25% in science. Over the last three years, pupils' performance levels in Welsh oracy have been better than those for the authority, the family and Wales, but slightly lower in writing and reading.

In general, since 2008, some progress can be seen in the school's performance. In 2010, the percentage of pupils that reached the expected level in English and

mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was slightly higher than that of the authority and Wales. The school's Welsh results were higher than the average for Wales but lower than the average for the authority. Average performance in science was the same as that for both Wales and the authority. In general, performance has been uneven over a period of four years, with the most noticeable progress in English and mathematics.

The percentage who reach the expected level in English oracy and reading has been higher than family, authority and Wales averages, and higher than authority and Wales averages in writing. The percentage who reach the expected level in Welsh writing has been higher than the family and Wales averages, and higher than Wales averages in reading and oracy.

The school does not compare favourably with similar schools when benchmarked against those with a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The school is among the top 25% in English, among the lower 50% in Welsh and mathematics, and among the bottom 25% in science. Results in English were raised this year and a significant increase was gained in standardised test results in reading, following a specific focus on raising standards.

This year, the percentage attaining beyond the expected levels in both key stages was lower than authority, family and Wales averages in all subjects.

There has been no significant trend alluding to any differences between the results of boys and girls over a period of four years.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils' awareness of the requirements of healthy living is good. Their interest and understanding is stimulated by relevant aspects of the curriculum, appropriate eating choices and numerous extra-curricular physical activities.

Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that they are treated with respect, that they are happy at school and that they feel safe. Almost all pupils behave well in lessons and during less formal times during school life. Pupils turn to adults confidently for support. In addition, prefects among the pupils, called 'Great Mates', help pupils to play together and offer support to their peers, as required.

Attendance is good at approximately 94%, which is higher than the county and national averages. Pupils in key stage 2 have an increasing voice in their education by discussing their progress and choosing weekly themes. The school council and eco council are effective voices for the pupils' aspirations and their suggestions are responded to appropriately.

Almost all pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase develop appropriately towards becoming independent learners, but the ability of many pupils to work independently throughout the rest of the school is inconsistent. However, they keep to tasks well for extended periods and make good use of their time.

Pupils arrange frequent activities to raise money for good causes of their choosing.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school plans stimulating learning experiences that engage pupils' interest. In the Foundation Phase, plans are made on the basis of the child's individual experiences and, in key stage 2, effective joint plans are made on agreed themes. Overall, the key stage 2 curriculum is planned rigorously and builds on pupils' previous experiences. Educational visits and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' experiences effectively. However, at times, the activities provided do not develop pupils successfully into becoming independent learners.

Through purposeful planning, the school succeeds in ensuring that literacy, numeracy and information technology skills are developed appropriately across the curriculum. The practice of targeting specific groups of pupils to promote reading skills has had a very positive effect on standards.

The school develops pupils' Welshness in a completely natural and inclusive way that nurtures respect for the language, their area and their traditions. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig has been successfully integrated into each aspect of the curriculum.

The school is an important part of the village community, and contributes frequently to concerts, services and local eisteddfodau.

The school implements good sustainable practices, such as developing nature spots and recycling materials. Members of the eco council, in particular, are firmly committed to this aspect. Pupils show empathy by raising money towards good causes overseas.

Teaching: Good

Good opportunities are provided for pupils to lead and direct learning. This leads to teaching that succeeds in building learners' motivation and enthusiasm. Classroom management is consistent throughout the school and teachers create a friendly and caring ethos.

Where teaching is good in the Foundation Phase, teachers have a very good understanding of the steps that lead to developing the children's attitudes, skills and knowledge across each area of learning. They succeed in nurturing pupils' independence, enquire and question effectively and feed language consistently. Where teaching is less effective, tasks are closed and the opportunity to develop independent learning skills effectively is missed. Where teaching is good in key stage 2, lessons are of a lively pace and expectations for attainment are high. Where teaching is less effective, previous experiences are not built on sufficiently and tasks do not stretch the most able pupils enough.

Teachers give pupils frequent feedback, both orally and in writing. However, no dedicated periods are planned for pupils to act on the feedback given. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities for self-assessment and to assess their peers.

All pupils have individual improvement targets. These targets are devised jointly and shared with parents. Pupils become aware, therefore, of what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.

Annual reports on pupils' progress are detailed and give a comprehensive picture of pupils' attainment and progress. Older pupils are given the opportunity to contribute to their reports by evaluating the year's extra-curricular work.

There are effective and comprehensive systems in place for tracking progress. Pupils' work at the end of key stage 2 is moderated internally and at cluster level. However, there is no robust system in place to moderate pupils' attainment throughout the school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides exceptional care to all the pupils. Good behaviour is promoted effectively by a whole-school plan that emphasises the positive, making extensive use of circle time reflection, personal and social education lessons and physical resources, such as a quiet area.

Pupils play a prominent and successful part in social and cultural events at local, county and national levels. At the time of inspection, pupils were preparing eagerly for the National Eisteddfod's visit to the area in summer 2011.

Pupils benefit from a good working relationship with a large number of support agencies, which is one of the school's main strengths. Communication with parents is effective in order to disseminate good educational practices.

The provider has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

The provision for special educational needs is of a very high quality and promotes full access to the curriculum for each pupil. The school proactively identifies pupils' needs at a very early stage. Early intervention is planned carefully and a detailed tracking system is used to progress learning. As a result, there is measurable progress in the attainment of these pupils. Individual education plans are very effective documents.

Autistic spectrum disorder needs are responded to excellently. The school's expertise is recognised across the county and nationwide, and three members of the school's staff have held a national workshop. The additional learning needs co-ordinator also disseminates good practice in a county-wide early intervention steering group.

Learning environment: Good

The school has a friendly and caring ethos. It is an inclusive community that ensures equal opportunities for all pupils. The school deals with complaints in a fair and sensitive manner.

The school stands in a modern new building that includes energy saving devices, such as a system that collects and recycles rainwater. Good use is made of the school's extensive grounds, in which nature areas and a Celtic house have been established with grant aid and the support of volunteers. There are colourful and stimulating displays and artefacts in each classroom and in communal areas. All parts of the school are kept clean and tidy. In general, there are good resources to teach every aspect of the curriculum.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and he manages to convey that vision successfully to staff, governors and pupils. He knows the school well. In a sincere and professional way, he offers clear strategic direction to the school's life and work, which has a positive influence on pupils' standards and wellbeing throughout the school. The senior management team and governors work well in partnership with the headteacher to realise his vision.

A senior management team was established recently. As yet, this structure and the role of the deputy have not been sufficiently formalised to affect the process of ensuring consistency in the provision across all classes.

The school has a wide range of management and curricular policies that are implemented effectively. Recently, clear job descriptions were drawn up, which offer a basis for promoting consistency in the future.

The governing body fulfils its statutory roles effectively. Its members have a good awareness of the school's current performance and they challenge and question the school's performance conscientiously. Governors visit classrooms regularly. These visits are a means for them to offer successful support to the school in strategic planning.

The school succeeds in giving due attention to a number of current priorities. It works acceptably towards ensuring consistency in the provision for the Foundation Phase, thinking skills and assessment for learning.

The school is also committed to the standards of the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools accreditations, in order to promote pupils' health and fitness and their respect towards the environment. The school also develops the attention given to pupils' voice in all aspects of school life.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation process clearly identifies the majority of areas for development in the school. The school's self-evaluation procedure includes staff discussions in specific meetings. The school includes the opinions of governors, parents and pupils effectively in its self-evaluation arrangements.

The outcomes of the self-evaluation process influence the priorities in the school development plan appropriately. The plan is of a good quality and is based on an evaluation of the previous plan and the priorities that emerged during the self-evaluation process. The priorities are clear, and successful outcomes and the effect on standards are described clearly.

Teachers in the Foundation Phase, along with the additional learning needs co-ordinator, work well as a team and in county networks. This practice is not developing as well in key stage 2. Internally, the school holds departmental meetings to plan the curriculum and share the latest teaching practices, such as developing thinking skills, assessment for learning and tracking pupils' progress.

A staff performance management system is in place and is a good basis for improving individuals in the school context.

Partnership working: Good

The school has forged a range of useful strategic partnerships.

There is a strong relationship with parents and they support developments such as a play area on the school yard, the Celtic house and art projects.

The school works closely with other Welsh schools in the area on various projects and holds joint training. Close and effective partnerships exist between the nursery settings that are situated on the school's campus. Transition arrangements from the nursery to the Foundation Phase and from key stage 2 to the secondary school are effective and inclusive.

The school has forged good partnerships with a wide variety of public and commercial bodies, including local shops and companies, and agencies such as North East Wales Wildlife. Representatives from the emergency services visit the school regularly to give appropriate training and experiences.

The close links with the local community have a positive influence on the quality of education.

Resource management: Good

Overall, the school manages its resources effectively.

In general, staff create an exciting and attractive environment for pupils. The use of assistants adds to the experiences and support for pupils in almost all classes.

The school provides a suitable programme of curricular training for teaching and support staff. However, as yet, the school does not provide appropriate training to develop the leadership skills of the new management team.

Overall, teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time effectively.

As pupils attain good standards and the school makes effective use of resources, the school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

In all of the questionnaires received from the parents, they state that they are satisfied with the school in general, and that their children enjoy school, are happy there and feel safe. They also believe that the pupils behave well.

All parents are of the opinion that the teachers work effectively and encourage the children to work hard. They are happy with the progress made by pupils and the variety of activities offered to them.

Almost all parents are happy with the information that they receive about pupils' progress and feel at ease about coming to the school to ask for information. They feel that the school is well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

The questionnaire was completed by 90 learners from key stage 2 and the team spoke with pupils during the inspection. All learners state that they are happy and feel safe at school, and that they know whom to approach if they are worried.

They say that the teachers teach them effectively about the importance of knowing how to stay healthy and exercise regularly.

Only around 60% of pupils responded that behaviour in the school was good and that misbehaviour does not affect their ability to work. This is not the perception of the inspection team from observing classes and as a result of questioning learners face-to-face.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Prydwen Elfed Owens	Team Inspector
John Roberts	Lay Inspector
Robert Huw Jenkins	Peer Inspector
Dafydd Rhys (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