



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 Cystennin

**The Old Highway,
Mochdre,
Conwy,
LL28 5AU**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

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:

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 Cystennin is a bilingual junior school serving the village of Mochdre near Colwyn Bay. There are currently sixty seven pupils on roll organised into three mixed aged classes. All come from English-speaking homes. No-one speaks Welsh as a first language or comes from an ethnic minority background.

The accommodation comprises three classrooms, a number of resource areas and a good-sized multipurpose hall. There are extensive grounds, which include a level playing field.

The area served by the school is described as being mainly socially and economically deprived. Fifty-five per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meal (FSM), which is considerably above the local authority and national averages. This is an increase of 20 per cent since the last inspection.

Baseline assessments in the infants' school indicate that attainment on entry is significantly below national and local averages. **Currently, 45 per cent of the pupils are identified as having additional learning needs which is significantly higher than local authority and national averages. Three pupils have statements of additional learning needs.**

With the exception of the head teacher, all current teachers have been appointed since the school was last inspected in June 2005.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Cystennin is £3659 which compares with a maximum of £9816 and a minimum of £2909 for primary schools in Conwy. The school has the 33rd highest budget per pupil out of the 61 primary schools in Conwy.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are good;
- during three of the last four years, performance in teacher assessments at the end of key stage 2 has been consistently better than both local authority and national results;
- imaginative learning experiences succeed in engaging the interests of the full range of pupils; and
- the school provides good value for money.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leaders and managers know their school well and have robust self- evaluation processes;
- strategic planning and processes for decision-making are effective: and
- close partnership working with other cluster schools increases the school's capacity for continuing improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 improve standards of handwriting in all classes;
- R2 provide more opportunities for parents to contribute to self-evaluation processes;
- R3 establish more robust systems with its feeder infants school for moderating teacher assessment; and
- R4 improve provision for more able and talented pupils.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils make good progress in learning. Most recall previous learning well and acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills confidently. Pupils' problem solving and thinking skills develop well across the school.

Most pupils achieve good standards in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology skills. Pupils of all ages listen carefully during lessons and express themselves confidently and clearly during group discussions. Most read a range of texts fluently and accurately and produce pieces of writing that are often well organised, clear and interesting. By the end of the key stage, nearly all develop well the wider skills and application needed to equip them for the next stage of their education. However, the majority of pupils do not write neatly and this impacts on presentation and legibility.

Pupils of all ages make good progress in Welsh language development. Nearly all respond positively to greetings and instructions with the more confident expressing their needs clearly through simple learned phrases. As pupils progress through the key stage, most speak, read and write Welsh with appropriate accuracy and fluency.

End of key stage 1 National Curriculum assessments show that pupils encompass the full ability range.

With the exception of 2010, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science at the end of the key stage over the past four years has been consistently better than both local authority and national results. The percentages achieving the core subject indicator, which is the expected level in each of the three core subjects, have also generally been higher than local and national figures. When compared with other schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, results between 2007 and 2009 were in the highest 25 per cent in nearly every subject. They have also been higher than other schools facing similar challenges.

In 2010, end of key stage 1 performance in all three subjects was significantly lower than local and national figures and also lower than most other schools facing similar challenges. The percentage who achieved the CSI was also much lower than local and national results. The school attributes these results to the higher than usual percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the cohort.

The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 in either English or science in 2010 was slightly higher than those in nearly all schools facing similar challenges. No pupils attained Level 5 in mathematics.

There was no significant difference in 2010 between the percentage of girls and boys who attained the expected levels in the core subjects. Nearly all pupils, including

those entitled to free school meals and the less able, make good or better progress throughout the key stage.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils face new experiences and challenges confidently and are keen to inquire and ask questions. Most are highly engaged and motivated and display pride and confidence in their work. Many have the skills needed to improve their own learning, work with others and solve problems.

Pupils of all ages have a secure understanding of how they can become healthy, both through what they eat and the physical activity they undertake. The School Nutrition Action Group is well established and is actively involved in establishing a list of healthy foods. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and feel free from physical and verbal abuse. Most attain well in their personal, social and cultural development.

Nearly all pupils are considerate and courteous and relate very well to each other and adults. Most demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Attendance during the past three years has been in line with local authority and national averages. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

As they mature, all pupils very readily undertake responsibilities and, through the school council, the eco-committee and other activities, play an active part in the school and the community. Pupils are confident that their voice is being heard and they are effectively involved in planning school improvements.

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

Teachers and practitioners collaborate closely to plan flexible and imaginative activities which succeed in engaging the interests of the full range of pupils. Stimulating and sometimes innovative learning experiences, ensure that pupils are challenged by relevant activities that provide continuity and progression in their learning. Effective learning support programmes enable all pupils to take part fully in every activity.

Detailed planning ensures that all pupils acquire the literacy, communication, numeracy and information communication technology skills necessary for them to access the wider curriculum. Problem solving skills and thinking skills are developed systematically across the school and make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

Planning and provision for Welsh language development is thorough and well-adapted to pupils' ages and ability. There is good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of Wales.

The school works very closely with members of the community and contributes regularly to local events. However, links with local commercial or industrial organisations/enterprises are limited.

The school acts sustainably and pupils are actively involved with conserving energy and minimising waste. Numerous good quality opportunities are provided for raising pupils' awareness of the international dimension and global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. All teachers have wide subject knowledge and have successfully undertaken new initiatives, such as assessment for learning and thinking skills, which they consistently use to support learning. A variety of strategies are used effectively to motivate pupils and to incorporate key skills into lessons. Through purposeful intervention and skilful questioning, pupils' ideas and thinking are challenged and the quality of learning improved. All teachers and practitioners successfully promote good behaviour and interact well with pupils to support their learning. Incidental Welsh is purposefully integrated into teaching in all classes. Teachers ensure that the needs of all pupils are met regardless of gender, race or ability. This is a particularly strong feature in the provision for pupils with additional learning needs who are very well supported by teachers and support staff. Although most pupils are suitably challenged by activities that are well matched to their ability and stage of development, not enough attention is paid to the needs of the more able and talented.

Systems for assessing pupil progress are effective. Most pupils regularly assess their own progress and that of their peers by modelling good practice, offering support and through peer assessment. Oral feedback by teachers and practitioners is effective and constructive. There are clear, efficient systems for tracking and maintaining information on pupils' progress. National Curriculum assessments, together with the outcomes of standardised tests and continuous teacher assessments, are closely analysed and used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. Assessment for learning strategies are successfully implemented throughout the school. Moderation of teacher assessment with the feeder infant school is in the early stages of development.

Parents are kept well informed about their children's achievements and targets through comprehensive annual reports and regular meetings with staff.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community which values the contribution of each individual. Effective procedures exist to support pupils' health and wellbeing and to encourage their involvement in their school and the wider community. These arrangements, together with the school's ethos and values, contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff know pupils well and strive to ensure that their personal needs are met.

Identification and assessment of pupils with additional learning needs is sensitive and relevant in all areas of the curriculum. The thorough arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs enables most to make good or better progress in learning

and attainment. Specialist help for specific groups who require additional guidance and opportunities to 'catch up' is exemplary. Parents and carers are kept fully informed. Statutory procedures are followed well and reviews held when required.

The school has appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school provides an inclusive learning environment in which all pupils are treated fairly in accordance with its equality policies. Teaching and learning resources are of good quality and in sufficient quantity to ensure the curriculum is taught effectively. Staff work well to develop a positive ethos for learning. They encourage all pupils to participate fully in the life of the school.

The accommodation is of good quality and classrooms are adequate for the number of pupils on roll. Accommodation is very well maintained and contains many attractive and informative displays of pupils' work and achievements. The outdoor learning areas are used well by all classes to support the work of pupils.

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

The senior management team works closely together to create a clear vision for the school which is shared by all staff and governors. High expectations are communicated and this has a good influence on standards and well-being across the school. All staff work together to foster a positive whole-school ethos where pupils feel valued. Staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities diligently. Information and data are analysed thoroughly by the managers and governors to enable them to make sound strategic planning decisions.

Performance management is implemented in line with statutory requirements and the arrangements include all members of staff. Training needs are planned appropriately to meet both individual and school priorities. The performance management process is closely linked to school improvement strategies and this impacts positively on the ***school development plan***.

National and local priorities are incorporated effectively into the school's programme of work with the leadership team allocating time and resources to ensure effective implementation. The adoption of assessment for learning strategies and thinking skills have positively impacted upon standards and teaching styles.

Governors are well informed about the school's performance and the issues that affect it. Through their involvement in the regular overview of the school development plan, they are well aware of the priorities for school improvement. Governors act as critical friends and challenge the head teacher and staff to look for further improvements. There are appropriate procedures for responding to concerns and complaints.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders and staff know their school well and use this knowledge purposefully to identify areas for development and target setting. Self-evaluation is a robust, reflective and productive feature throughout the school and teachers reflect on the provision, and plan for ways to make improvements and meet the changing needs of the school.

A broad range of evidence is collated and scrutinised during self-evaluation and subsequently used to identify priorities. Performance data is thoroughly analysed and any emerging trends addressed promptly. Senior managers draw on first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and learning and also encourage pupils and staff to share their views. However, there are no clear arrangements to include the views of parents in the self-evaluation processes.

The school development plan is a collaborative effort involving staff and governors. Most of its priorities emanate from the outcomes of self-evaluation and are mainly expressed in terms of pupil achievement and progress. It includes a manageable number of priorities and detailed actions to be taken, by whom and timescales. Priorities are carefully costed and appropriate success criteria and targets are also included.

A well-established professional learning community within the school enables staff to develop and share their professional knowledge effectively. The school has recently embarked on closer collaborative working with its feeder infants school, however, this development has not yet led to joint working practices. This has been noted as a priority in the current school development plan.

Recommendations in the previous inspection report have been successfully addressed.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership working with parents, the local community, local schools and educational establishments are very productive and are used effectively to enhance learning opportunities for pupils. Nearly all parents indicated positive views about the school in their questionnaires.

The school collaborates well with the local high school and this has a positive impact on the primary school's own curriculum development initiatives. Partnership working with local authority agencies and local clusters of schools is a developing feature which enables the school to build capacity for continuing improvement.

Links with the wider community, especially with parents, are sought and opportunities are presented for parents to become involved in the life and work of the school. Parents are informed both formally and informally of pupil progress.

Positive links with numerous agencies lead to effective support and information sharing systems being in place which can be accessed easily in times of need.

Resource management: Good

The school leadership team efficiently and effectively manages resources to ensure that pupils can receive a school experience which is of good quality. Through the extremely effective use of the expertise of a Higher Level Teaching Assistant , teaching staff are provided with the time to fulfil their professional duties in planning, preparation and assessment. This arrangement makes a positive impact on pupil progress.

Learning support staff are effectively deployed to meet the identified needs of pupils with special educational needs. However, no additional support is provided for the more able and talented pupils.

The effect of resources on teaching and learning is reviewed regularly and future needs are planned for carefully. There are systematic and accurate budgetary arrangements in place and expenditure decisions are linked well with priorities for learning and pupil wellbeing.

The school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Most of the 20 per cent of questionnaires that were returned express a good level of satisfaction with the school in general. Nearly all parents believe that pupils behave well and say that their children have settled in well and like school. **Nearly all think** that teaching is good, and that their child is making good progress and helped to become more mature and to take on responsibility. Most feel they are well informed about their child's progress and that the school is well run. A few say they do not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

All pupils completed the pupil questionnaires and members of the inspection team **spoke to a small group of them during the inspection**. Nearly all believe that they are doing well at school and know who to talk to if they feel worried or upset. They know what to do and who to ask if they find the work too difficult and say that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. All feel safe in school and believe that the school deals well with any bullying. A few expressed concern about the behaviour of other pupils.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Wil Williams	Reporting Inspector
Colette Gribble	Team Inspector
Kerry Jones	Lay Inspector
Dorothy Davies	Peer Inspector
Iwan 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