



*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 Min Y Ddol  
Lon Plas Kynmaston  
Cefn Mawr  
Wrexham  
LL14 3PA**

**Date of inspection: December 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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement 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.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).**

**© Crown Copyright 2012: 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.**

## Context

Ysgol Min Y Ddol, which is a designated Welsh medium school, is situated in the village of Cefn Mawr, a few miles from Wrexham, and it is maintained by Wrexham County Borough Council.

The school serves the villages of Cefn Mawr, Rhosymedre and the nearby area. Approximately four pupils come from a wider area. A Flying Start unit is situated on the school site for the area's most vulnerable children. Children are admitted to the school at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. At present, there are 42 pupils who are the equivalent of full-time pupils on roll; 7 of them are nursery age children, who attend in the mornings only.

The school describes the area from which most of the pupils come as disadvantaged. Approximately 37% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is higher than the county percentage and considerably higher than the national percentage.

Seven pupils (about 16%) are on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register and this shows a pattern of increase. None of the pupils has a statement of Special Educational Needs.

One pupil comes from a home where one parent speaks Welsh. The remainder come from non-Welsh speaking homes. According to the school, almost all the pupils are able to speak Welsh fluently by the beginning of Year 1. There are no pupils from an ethnic minority background at present.

The school was last inspected in November 2006 and the present headteacher has been in post since January 2001.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Min Y Ddol in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £5,424 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in Wrexham primary schools is £8,569 and the minimum is £2,903. Ysgol Min Y Ddol is in fifth place out of the 60 primary schools in Wrexham from the point of view of school budget per pupil.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>

### Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- Foundation Phase pupils are developing into confident, independent learners and are achieving good standards;
- pupils' oral and reading skills are showing consistent progress;
- the school is an inclusive community with a positive ethos;
- pupils' behaviour and commitment to their learning is good;
- the majority of the teaching is generally good;
- overall, the school provides an appropriate range of opportunities for most pupils.

However

- many key stage 2 pupils are not achieving their full potential during lessons and in their work books, and the standard of work is not appropriate to their age and ability;
- in general, the teaching does not motivate the majority of key stage 2 pupils to be able to work independently in their lessons;
- pupils do not have enough opportunities to create extended pieces of work in areas across the curriculum; and
- the school has not reviewed the key stage 2 schemes for the requirements of Curriculum 2008 sufficiently.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory because:

- the school does not have a clear strategic direction;
- the school has not made progress on the recommendations of the previous inspection;
- the school does not analyse data in enough detail in order to prioritise and set strategies to improve pupils' performance;
- there is no clear link between the self-evaluation report and the school development plan;
- the school does not give enough consideration to the viewpoints of the governing body, school staff, pupils and parents;
- the meetings of leaders, governors and staff do not refer sufficiently to pupils' standards and outcomes; and
- the school's documentation does not meet statutory requirements.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise pupils' standards in extended writing across the curriculum;
- R2 ensure that pupils develop as independent learners who understand how they learn, and what needs to be done to improve their work;
- R3 raise pupils' attendance levels;
- R4 ensure that the whole-school schemes of work meet the requirements of the full range of pupils, including developing their skills;
- R5 improve the quality of teaching and assessment across the school by eliminating the shortcomings identified;
- R6 establish a thorough process of self-evaluation and planning for improvement that includes all the school's stakeholders, and that leads to a development plan that focuses clearly on raising standards and improving provision;
- R7 build clear and timely communication systems with parents; and
- R8 ensure that all the school's documentation meets statutory requirements.

### What happens next?

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are needed in relation to this school. The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress every term.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

On the whole, Ysgol Min y Ddol's pupils are making appropriate progress. The Foundation Phase pupils particularly, from nursery age up to Year 2, are developing as confident and independent pupils and are achieving good standards.

However, in key stage 2, the majority of pupils cannot work independently in their lessons and they depend excessively on teachers' guidance and direction. As a result, pupils show very little understanding of their own learning, and what they need to do in order to improve their work. Many pupils do not reach their full potential during lessons and in their work books, and the standard of work is not appropriate to their age and ability.

Most pupils communicate confidently orally in Welsh and English. According to their age, ability and linguistic background, they can converse clearly and at length about their work and informally in a variety of situations. They have increasingly good vocabulary, which is developing appropriately.

The reading skills of the majority of pupils develop well throughout their school career, and by the end of key stage 2, they can read accurately and intelligently in Welsh and English. They can discuss the contents of books effectively and express an opinion on them, and talk about their favourite authors.

Across the school, the majority of pupils are able to write at length to an acceptable standard in Welsh and English. However, the handwriting and presentation of work of many pupils in key stage 2 lacks organisation, and they do not create enough extended pieces of work in areas across the curriculum.

Whatever their linguistic background, nearly all pupils develop the ability to use Welsh to communicate effectively by the time they reach year 1.

Because the cohorts of pupils are consistently small at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, it is not possible to come to a meaningful judgement based on the results. For example, in 2011, one key stage 1 pupil represented 20% of the cohort, and in key stage two, one pupil represented 50% of the cohort.

In general during the last four years, except for the end of key stage 1 in 2011, every child has succeeded in reaching the expected levels, namely level 2 or higher at the end of key stage 1, and level 4 or higher at the end of key stage 2. This places the school consistently in the highest 25% of similar schools on the basis of the number of pupils entitled to free school meals and higher than the averages of the family schools and Wales.

Achievement at higher levels than expected, namely level 3 at the end of key stage 1 and level 5 at the end of key stage 2, is uneven.

There is no difference in terms of boys' and girls' attainment, or between pupils who receive free school meals and those who do not.

Pupils with additional learning needs make appropriate progress during their period at the school, and usually succeed in meeting the targets that have been set for them.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

In general, the majority of pupils take interest in their work. They listen well during the learning sessions and respond appropriately to questions and directions.

Pupils' behaviour is very good at all times. They show respect for one another and for adults, and they work together effectively within the class. This respect can also be seen in the playground, and at lunch times.

Attendance levels for 2011 were 90.7%, which is lower than the local and national averages, and lower than the school's previous levels.

Pupils are aware of the importance of eating healthily. For example, they take part in activities to grow and cook vegetables in the school garden. They all enjoy regular cookery lessons, where emphasis is placed on healthy foods.

In addition to physical education classes, they take part enthusiastically in the activities of the dance club, which includes participating in local public events.

Pupils benefit from the close links with a number of organisations, agencies, businesses and individuals, and are developing a good range of social and personal skills that prepare them effectively for life outside the school.

Through the activities of the school council, which is also responsible for eco matters and being a healthy school, pupils of every age have a positive influence on the school's work.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
---	-----------------

### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

Overall, the school provides an appropriate range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for most of its pupils. The planning is detailed and purposeful for Foundation Phase pupils. It meets national requirements and it pays attention to pupils' interests.

To date, the school has not reviewed key stage 2 plans for the requirements of Curriculum 2008 sufficiently. There is not a specific enough reference in the plans to differentiation for different groups of pupils.

The school provides appropriately for developing communication. Pupils have opportunities to develop reading throughout the school, including an effective link with the local library and holding workshops with poets. However, an

overdependence on work sheets limits considerably the opportunities pupils have to develop their ability to write at length across the curriculum.

Appropriate attention is paid to the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and events such as the school eisteddfod and St David's Day celebrations are a way of promoting Wales and Welsh among the pupils and their families.

The school provides well for the promotion of sustainable development. It is part of the Eco-schools scheme and the scheme's outcomes have a prominent place in the life of the school. The school council has a clear role in recycling and saving energy. Although there is good provision for global citizenship in the Foundation Phase and in areas such as geography and religious education, it is not developed sufficiently in key stage 2.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Across the school, the majority of the teaching is generally good. In the Foundation Phase, the teaching ensures that pupils are motivated and show interest in their learning, although this is not to be seen in the majority of lessons in key stage 2.

Where the teaching is good or better, the teachers and support staff have a good understanding of the curriculum. They ensure that the learning outcomes are clear and the range of teaching styles promote effective learning. The activities are challenging and interesting and the use of resources is good. The purposeful planning and support of adults is well focused and contributes considerably to the quality of pupils' learning experiences.

Where the teaching is adequate or worse, the lessons do not have a suitable pace and the tasks are not differentiated appropriately for the ability range. Only a little of the questioning is probing and open-ended and the teaching techniques do not allow pupils to be independent learners. The use of strategies to promote thinking skills is inadequate.

The school has effective systems for tracking progress in the Foundation Phase but these are not operational in key stage 2. The majority of teachers use their assessments to plan appropriately for the next stages in pupils' development. They use assessment for learning techniques, such as setting success criteria, so that pupils know what to do to improve their work. These processes are not embedded sufficiently in key stage 2.

The school is successful in identifying cohorts of pupils to be targeted for developing personal and social skills in the Foundation Phase and raising reading standards in key stage two. The school uses portfolios effectively in order to facilitate the process of determining levels.

The reports to parents meet the requirements.



### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is a happy community and pupils feel safe in it. There are good arrangements in place to support pupils' health and well-being.

The school promotes living healthily effectively and it is part of the Healthy Schools scheme. Regular opportunities are provided throughout the school to develop fitness and positive attitudes towards health through a variety of physical activities. Sex education and education on substance misuse are woven into the teaching programme and are having a good impact.

The school promotes pupils' positive attitudes towards themselves and others, and values such as fairness and respect are promoted well by the school. The school provides effective opportunities to promote pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The school council is active and influences aspects of school life appropriately.

The school has an effective link with specialist agencies, and visits by the educational psychologist, health visitors, the Police and the fire service are used to reinforce the provision.

The school has appropriate procedures and a policy for safeguarding.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. These needs are identified quickly and the appropriate steps are followed. The individual education plans are reviewed regularly and parents have an active role in the process. There is a good link between the school's additional learning needs co-ordinator and the local secondary school's co-ordinator, and this promotes effective transfer of information. The school makes good use of specialist services such as support teachers and speech therapists.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive community with a positive ethos. The school promotes aspects of equality and diversity effectively through curriculum themes, and personal and social education, religious education and well-being programmes.

The building offers a range of very good classrooms and facilities for the number of pupils. The school makes effective use of them. The rooms are large and colourful, with stimulating displays of pupils' work throughout the school. There is a good variety of resources that enrich learning and teaching. Good use is made of the nearby library.

The buildings and the grounds are well-maintained and they provide an appropriate environment for playing and learning. Good use is made of the area's sports facilities in order to complement the opportunities that are provided in the school.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
--	-----------------------

### **Leadership: Unsatisfactory**

The headteacher, with the support of the staff, ensures that the school has a happy and friendly ethos that gives equal opportunities to all pupils.

Informal meetings are held regularly between the headteacher and the deputy. However, the meetings are not structured and they are not strategic enough. Whole-school staff meetings are held fairly regularly, but, according to the minutes, they do not refer sufficiently to pupils' standards and outcomes. As a result, the information that the staff has on the school's performance and needs is scarce.

In general, the school does not share good practice. Under the leadership of the deputy headteacher, the Foundation Phase staff work together very effectively and a definite order and structure exists.

The Governing Body is very supportive of the school. Its understanding of the school's performance is developing gradually but the governors do not use the relevant information on performance to operate strategically nor to challenge the school. The annual report to parents by the chair of the governors does not meet the statutory requirements.

The school does not have formal Performance Management processes in place. As a result, the school does not comply with statutory requirements. The school staff do not have current job descriptions and therefore they are not sure of their responsibilities.

The school has responded well to national priorities. The Flying Start sessions target vulnerable pupils and this provision has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and well-being. The school implements the requirements of the Foundation Phase fully and this is a strength in the school.

### **Improving quality: Unsatisfactory**

The self-evaluation report does not give a clear picture of the school's current performance. The school has not included all stakeholders in the process of producing it and therefore it does not give sufficient consideration to the viewpoints of the governing body, school staff, children and parents.

Neither the headteacher nor those who are responsible for subjects monitor the quality of teaching. As a result, the school does not have clear information on the school's standards nor the aspects to be developed further. The school does not analyse performance data or pupils' attainments in sufficient detail so that it can prioritise and set strategies to improve pupils' performance.

There is no clear link between the self-evaluation document and the school development plan. The priorities identified in the school development plan are too open-ended and they do not focus on raising pupils' standards and outcomes. The

targets are not measurable. As a result, it is not a tool for measuring improvement in the school.

The school handbook does not meet the statutory requirements in full.

Following the school inspection in 2006, the school has not succeeded in responding to four of the recommendations. Obvious shortcomings persist in the quality of the self-evaluation process, and in the preparation and implementation of the school development plan. The governors' role has not been developed, and the statutory shortcomings in the documentation remain.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has established good strategic partnerships with a number of organisations such as Flying Start and Wrexham Tennis Club. The strong partnerships with social workers, the Local Authority and health visitors are used very effectively and they have led to improvement in home links, monitoring attendance and pupils' satisfaction in their learning.

The school works together effectively with the officers of the Finance Department and the liaison officer when discussing budgets, when planning and to ensure the quality of the provision.

The partnership with the local library has developed pupils' linguistic and information and communication technology skills well through regular visits.

The school has effective arrangements for transferring pupils to the secondary school. Regular visits are arranged between both schools and this has a positive impact on the transfer process. The school has also succeeded in creating a good partnership in the moderating process. Working together with the cluster schools has given the school the opportunity to share good practice.

The communication that exists between the school and the parents has not been developed sufficiently.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The school has an appropriate level of teaching staff. The Foundation Phase staff fulfil their roles very effectively, and promotes the motivation of all pupils. However, there is not sufficient discussion between the teachers in key stage 2, and expectations are inconsistent.

The school has a good range of resources and very effective use is made of them to promote learning.

The school's expenditure is not linked specifically to the school's priorities.

The school provides adequate value for money in terms of pupils' outcomes and in its use of finance.

## Appendix 1

### Comments on performance data

#### School performance data

Care is required when responding to the school performance data at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Because the cohorts of pupils are small, it is very difficult to reach a meaningful judgement based on the results. The number of pupils assessed at the end of both key stages varied between two and five – between 20% and 50% of the cohort.

In key stage 1, 100% of pupils succeeded in attaining level 2 or higher in the core subject indicator, Welsh, mathematics and science. This placed the school at the top of the family, and in the top 25% of similar schools on the basis of the number of pupils who receive free school meals. In 2011, pupils' achievement at level 2 or higher was 80% in the core subject indicator, Welsh and mathematics and 100% in science. This meant that the school was in the top 25% of similar schools in science, and in the lowest 50% in Welsh and mathematics.

In 2009 and 2010, no pupils attained the higher levels (level 3 or higher) in Welsh, mathematics and science. In 2010, the assessment results show that 20% had attained level 3 or higher in Welsh, 40% in mathematics and 60% in science. This was higher than the family averages in mathematics and science but lower in Welsh.

In key stage 2, in 2008, 2010 and 2011 every pupil succeeded in reaching level 4 or higher in every one of the core subjects. This means that the school is at the top of the family, and in the top 25% compared with similar schools on the basis of the numbers who are entitled to free school meals. There were no year six pupils in the school in 2009.

In 2008, 50% of pupils ensured an attainment of level 5 or higher in Welsh and mathematics, and 75% in English and science. This was higher than the averages for the family and Wales. No pupils attained this level in 2010, but in 2011 50% ensured the attainment at level 5 or higher. This was higher than the averages for the family and Wales.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Response to the learner questionnaires

Twelve pupils responded to the questionnaire, and a positive response was received to every question. The pupils all feel safe at school, and they say that the school deals well with any bullying. They all know to whom to turn if they are worried or concerned, and say that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and gives them many opportunities to take regular physical exercise. They believe that they are doing well at school and that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress. They all know to whom to turn if the work is difficult, and they feel that homework helps them to understand and improve their school work. There are sufficient equipment, books and computers available, according to each pupil, and the children behave well at all times, and do not hinder their fellow pupils' work.

#### Response to the parent questionnaires

Twenty-six questionnaires were received from parents. Each parent says that the teaching is good at the school, and that the staff expect their children to work hard and do their best. They all say that their children have had support to settle in well at the beginning of school and that the school helps their children to develop maturity and to shoulder responsibility. They also say that the school prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Most parents were satisfied with the school in general, and said that their children like school, behave well and are making good progress there. Most say that homework builds well on what their children learn at school. They say that their children are encouraged to keep healthy and do physical exercise and that their children are safe at school. Most say that a good variety of activities are organised by the school.

Many parents say that the school treats every child fairly, and that the school is well-run. A minority of pupils say that they do not receive regular information on their children's progress, and that they do not feel comfortable about asking a question or making suggestions to the school. A minority are also unsure about the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Terwyn Tomos	Reporting Inspector
Anwen Griffith	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Garem Jackson	Peer Inspector
Lyn Edwards	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report. If it is available, the data report can be seen on our website alongside this report.

## 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