



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Maes Ebbw School  
Maesglas Road  
Maesglas  
Newport  
NP20 3DG**

**Date of inspection: March 2016**

**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.

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## Context

Maes Ebbw School in Newport opened in 2001, following the amalgamation of two special schools. The 156 pupils all have a statement of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders.

The school has three sites across Newport (Maes Ebbw main site, Maes Ebbw Bach and Maes Ebbw Brynglas).

Nearly all pupils come from Newport, with very few living close to the school. Thirty-one per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Around one fifth of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, mainly from Asian and mixed race backgrounds.

The school mission is to provide a stimulating environment that challenges everyone's abilities and expectations.

There are currently the equivalent of 24 full-time teachers and 70 classroom support staff. The headteacher has been in post since 2012.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Although there are some strengths in the learning, teaching and in the care, support and guidance, the school's current performance is judged as adequate because:

- Pupils do not make good enough progress in achieving the targets in their individual plans
- There are weaknesses in teacher planning, which means that pupils are not sufficiently kept on task
- Aspects of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet requirements

### Prospects for improvement

The headteacher provides strong strategic direction to the school's work. However, prospects for improvement at the school are judged as adequate. This is because:

- Although leaders have recently introduced systems to analyse pupils' performance data in a consistent way, teachers do not use data effectively to set targets for pupil at the right level
- Leaders do not pay sufficient attention to evaluating the impact of provision on improving outcomes for pupils
- Staff do not use pupils' individual plans well enough to monitor and evaluate pupil progress and set appropriate next steps in learning and behaviour
- Recent issues regarding governance are not yet fully resolved and this limits the capacity of the governing body to focus clearly on supporting the school to improve standards

## Recommendations

R1 Improve pupils' outcomes to ensure that they reach their potential

R2 Ensure that plans and teaching provide sufficient challenge for all pupils

R3 Improve the quality of individual education and behaviour plans

R4 Address the shortcomings identified in safeguarding

R5 Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

Many pupils at Maes Ebbw School make appropriate progress in their learning. In relation to their needs and abilities, they concentrate well on their work and are interested in their learning. The small, but significant steps of progress made by pupils with complex physical needs show that, over time, these pupils make particularly strong progress.

There is no notable difference between the performance of boys and girls, pupils eligible for free school meals or those looked after by the local authority. The individualised approach to learning makes it inappropriate to compare the results of attainment for pupils at the school with national and local benchmarks.

Although most pupils generally engage well in the tasks provided, they do not consistently meet the individual education and behaviour targets set for them.

Pupils with complex physical needs use technology well, for example using switches to show their preferences. This helps them to join in with their peers in class. Many of these pupils respond extremely well to gentle movement programmes that support their physical development.

Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are developing effective use of schedules to know their daily activities. As a result, they understand the learning activities they have to complete before they move on or stop for lunch. This reduces their anxiety, helps them to be more able to learn and improves their behaviour. These pupils are increasing their use of a picture exchange system to extend their speech and communication skills.

Nearly all pupils reach the targets in their individual communication profile. Where necessary, they use signs and visual objects as prompts to support their understanding, make their needs known and express themselves.

Nearly all pupils apply their communication skills successfully in lessons across the curriculum and in their social exchanges with their peers in non-structured times. Many pupils are confident and make effective use of appropriate vocabulary in a range of situations, including the use of mathematical terms in a design technology lesson. They enjoy interacting with each other and with adults in a small group and whole class.

Most pupils make good progress against their literacy and numeracy targets. Over time, they show sound improvement. A few pupils progress from very early mark making to independent legible consistent letter formation when copying and writing independently.

Many pupils make appropriate progress in developing number skills. For instance, they count and record numbers up to 5 accurately and use tally marks appropriately with support, to record the number of objects they count. Many older pupils recognise the value of coins and use them to purchase items in their enterprise activities. They apply their skills in practical situations, such as when identifying costs needed to buy items in a supermarket.

In information and communication technology lessons, a few older pupils recall previously learned strategies of how to plan an attractive power point presentation using colour, font, and layout and how to input images before printing.

In rebound trampoline sessions, most pupils make good progress in developing their physical skills and show considerable enjoyment in this learning. A few pupils experiment with new movements with confidence and move from standing to seat drop and back to standing, confidently demonstrating good balance and body control.

During their time in key stages 3, 4 and 5, the majority of pupils gain a range of appropriate qualifications in courses matched well to their abilities. For example, in 2014-2015, ten pupils gained national accreditation in ASDAN New Horizons and Transition Challenge and four pupils attained the Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award. Most pupils stay on into post-16 provision at the school. Only a very few pupils that leave the school do not continue in education or training.

The majority of pupils make appropriate progress in relation to their needs and abilities in gaining the skills to understand simple Welsh greetings and phrases.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and know whom to talk to if they have any concerns. Nearly all pupils behave very well in classrooms and around the school. Where pupils have difficulty in managing their behaviour, they respond to staff intervention appropriately.

Most pupils are polite and show respect to each other, to staff and to visitors. Older pupils show care and consideration for younger pupils, for example by taking part in the 'buddy' programme. This helps older pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and provides younger pupils with good role models. Across the school, pupils develop their ability to work with others well. Many pupils sustain concentration appropriately when engaged in tasks and activities.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to eating healthy food and taking regular exercise. For example, they know that fruit and vegetables are good for them and understand that they need to drink water. Many enjoy taking part in physical activities in the school's gymnasium and swimming pools. They also participate actively in a range of suitable exercise and dance sessions throughout the day.

At 89.35%, attendance rates at the school are similar to those in the past three years. This is slightly lower than the Wales average for maintained special schools. Most pupils attend school regularly. A few pupils do not arrive punctually because their transport arrives late. There have been no permanent exclusions at the school for the past four years.

Pupils take part enthusiastically in groups that contribute appropriately to school life, including the school council and the eco-committee. Members of the school council have recently begun to gather the views of other pupils about aspects of the school's work, for example the school's music provision. As a result, pupils now have access to a wider range of musical activities such as learning to play the drums.

Older pupils take on a variety of responsibilities including delivering milk and fruit to classes and keeping the school grounds free of litter. Pupils also contribute well to the wider community, for example preparing a barbecue for visitors at school events and helping to organise quiz nights and discos for friends and families.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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**Learning experiences: Adequate**

Overall, the school provides a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences. However, these do not always engage all pupils.

Teachers deliver subjects within a range of motivating topics and themes, linked to the national literacy and numeracy framework.

The school tracks pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy effectively. A range of suitable strategies and resources, including phonics, supports the development of pupils' skills. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their skills across all areas of learning.

The school makes effective use of its three sites to group pupils according to key stage and individual needs. A very few pupils have opportunities to learn alongside their peers in mainstream schools and develop their social and communication skills.

Extra-curricular activities enrich the learning experiences of all pupils. Opportunities include sports camp, school sleepovers, and hip hop dance sessions.

Many older pupils have suitable access to vocational curriculum opportunities at a local college of further education.

A range of interesting enterprise initiatives, where pupils make and sell a variety of products, helps them to experience the world of work. However, opportunities to extend these experiences to the community are underdeveloped.

The school provides older pupils with a range of useful experiences to develop independence, self-esteem and confidence. These include taking responsibility for recycling, working with the school site manager and participating in the buddy programme.

There is suitable provision for pupils to develop their understanding of the Welsh language and Welsh culture.

Provision to develop pupils' understanding of sustainable development encourages pupils to recycle materials regularly and, in turn, to encourage younger peers to save energy. However, pupils are not fully involved in planning and monitoring of the eco-code and school action plan.



The school raises pupils' awareness of other cultures. However, links with other schools and countries are underdeveloped.

**Teaching: Adequate**

Generally, across the school, teachers plan their approaches and resources well to match pupils' needs. A few teachers use questioning particularly well to move pupils on in their learning at an appropriate pace. However, in a minority of classes, pupils have too much off task time. In a few classes, low level activities such as colouring do not provide pupils with enough challenge.

In classes for pupils with complex physical needs, teaching and support are particularly effective. For example, staff use appropriate sensory stories and therapeutic support effectively to engage pupils and encourage their participation.

Relationships between staff and pupils are generally strong and foster an environment where pupils feel safe. Staff manage pupil behaviour effectively. They know pupils well and engage and motivate them enthusiastically to participate in learning activities. They provide effective language models for pupils by speaking clearly, repeating information and using visual cues such as signs and symbols where appropriate.

Across the school, teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They annotate work to ensure that others working with the pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do next. However, teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their learning.

End of year reports to parents provide useful information on pupil achievement across the curriculum. However they do not indicate clearly enough how pupils can improve their work.

**Care, support and guidance: Adequate**

The school has effective policies and procedures to support pupils' health and wellbeing, including appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Nearly all staff know their pupils very well and respond effectively to concerns and issues.

The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development effectively through the curriculum, assemblies and interesting activity days such as work with artists in residence. The well-planned personal and social education programme provides valuable information about a range of important issues, including sex and relationships.

The school works well with external agencies that support and advise staff about individual pupils' needs. Teachers use information from specialist services such as the counsellor, nurse and therapists to provide effective support for pupils' learning and health needs, for example through touch therapy, rebound and hydrotherapy.

The careers education programme is well structured. This supports pupils well when they make transitions to college or other services.

All pupils have an individual education plan (IEP) with targets that relate well to their stated needs. However, staff do not use IEP targets well to evaluate pupil progress and set the next steps in learning.

Where appropriate, pupils also have individual behaviour plans (IBPs) and personal handling plans. These identify suitable targets and strategies that help staff to manage pupil behaviour and reduce the use of physical interventions and withdrawal. However, there is not enough emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour.

Reports to parents do not always provide parents with enough information about their child's progress and work with therapists.

Aspects of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet requirements. The inspection team shared these shortcomings with the school during the visit.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school's mission statement to provide "a happy and secure environment" is reflected in the school's caring ethos and fully inclusive community. There is a strong focus on equality and diversity. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to deal effectively with any form of discrimination. Pupils of all backgrounds and needs are included fully in all aspects of the school and treated with respect and dignity. Pupils are polite and friendly and feel safe within the school. The school makes effective use of assemblies to celebrate individual pupil achievements.

The accommodation at each site provides pupils with a stimulating, well-maintained learning environment. Classrooms are clean, tidy and resourced well to meet the learning needs of each pupil. Good quality wall displays enhance the learning environment. They are informative and attractive and reflect pupils' work well.

There are well-equipped specialist areas including sensory rooms, two hydrotherapy pools and provision for rebound therapy. Staff use these well to meet the complex and diverse needs of the pupils.

There is a good range of resources that are well matched to pupils' needs and the requirements of the curriculum. The school makes appropriate use of the grounds to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, there are suitable play areas on each site and an allotment area at Maes Ebbw, where pupils grow vegetables.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Leadership: Adequate**

The headteacher has worked with senior leaders and governors to establish a clear vision for pupils' learning and wellbeing at the school. She provides strong strategic direction to the school's work, for example by ensuring that there are suitable policies

that focus appropriately on meeting the wide range of pupils' needs. All staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The allocation of specific responsibilities is beginning to have a positive impact on the school's work. For example, the use of a business manager enables leaders to focus on school improvement issues. Staff in leadership roles support the headteacher in implementing the school's recently developed systems and policies appropriately. However, their overall role in improving pupil attainment and progress is at an early stage of development.

Arrangements for the performance management of all staff meet requirements. However, leaders do not always set performance targets that challenge teachers sufficiently to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders challenge instances of underperformance robustly.

Senior leaders show the capacity to manage change successfully, for example by introducing improved assessment arrangements for pupils on entry to the Foundation Phase. Leaders place considerable importance on implementing the national priority of improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. They work effectively within the school and with other schools in the locality to develop this practice.

Leaders have recently introduced systems to analyse pupil performance data in a consistent way. This is beginning to support all staff to track individual pupil progress effectively. However, leaders do not ensure that all teachers use data effectively to set individual performance targets for all pupils at the right level. The school has started to use pupil performance data appropriately to identify priorities for improvement and staff training, for example to raise standards of reading.

Recently, there have been significant issues regarding governors not following correct procedures. The school and local authority swiftly implemented appropriate plans to resolve these issues. However, at the time of inspection, these were not yet fully resolved. As a result, the governing body has not been able to focus clearly enough on supporting the school to improve standards. Despite these important issues, many governors have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They visit the school regularly to monitor activities, for example through learning walks, and provide helpful feedback to the school following their visits. They understand the school's current strengths and priorities for improvement and monitor expenditure and progress towards improvement goals carefully.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school has a detailed calendar of self-evaluation activities that cover many aspects of its work. All senior leaders contribute appropriately to these activities. They regularly look at a suitable range of first hand evidence such as pupils' work and teaching in lessons to monitor provision. In the best examples, senior leaders evaluate the quality of important strategies such as the use of physical intervention in detail. They use this information well to plan future improvement strategies.

Leaders make sound judgements about the level of compliance across the school in implementing policies and improvement strategies. However, they do not always pay sufficient attention to evaluating the impact of provision on improving outcomes for

pupils. As a result, they are unable to make accurate judgements about the overall effectiveness of practice. Leaders do not always identify important areas for development in practice across the school, such as in the effectiveness of pupils' individual education plans.

Arrangements for pupils to contribute to self-evaluation activities are in the very early stages of development. The school responds appropriately to recommendations from external evaluations, for instance in developing consistent criteria for lesson observations. It also listens to parental views and this has led to amended playtime arrangements.

Leaders have recently identified relevant priorities for improvement, for example improving standards of literacy, numeracy and improving assessment arrangements. These are included in the school's improvement plan. Leaders review progress against these strategies appropriately. Generally, the plan outlines the actions needed to implement planned improvements, identifies those with responsibility for monitoring and delivering plans and gives broad timescales for their delivery. However, plans do not always identify clearly the desired impact on improving outcomes for pupils and there are too many priorities for improvement. Overall, the school has made insufficient progress against the recommendations of the last inspection.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has established a range of effective partnerships that impact positively on provision and outcomes for pupils. For example, staff from health agencies work closely with the school to guide staff towards providing appropriate therapeutic support to pupils.

Generally, the school works effectively with parents to help pupils transfer the skills they learn in school to the home situation. For pupils with specific issues and health problems, the school liaises well with others to help parents secure the support they need.

The school has built positive partnerships with local mainstream schools. As a result of joint projects such as promoting healthy eating and shared assemblies, pupils get to know pupils from other schools in the community. There are beneficial partnerships with colleges of further education and careers agencies that help pupils continue their education when they leave school. The close work with other special schools helps teachers to develop accurate moderation of pupils' work.

There are useful links with local businesses that help to develop pupils' understanding of the world of work. These help pupils to develop their skills and apply them more effectively in the school's own enterprise activities.

Home school diaries keep parents informed about what their children do at school. However, parents do not always receive information promptly or in the most user friendly format.

**Resource management: Adequate**

The school has an appropriate number of qualified and experienced staff to ensure that all pupils receive access to the curriculum and other activities provided across the school. They make effective use of a range of resources that address pupils' needs suitably.

Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. As a result, they are able to support pupils' broad range of individual needs well.

The school provides staff with useful training that links well to aspects of the school's identified priorities and individual pupil needs. Through its links with networks of educational providers, the school has been able to strengthen its expertise in its addressing priorities.

All staff receive planning, preparation and assessment time.

The school makes appropriate use of grant funding to improve the quality of pupils' learning. For example, musical experiences have supported pupils to develop their confidence and performance skills.

Grants used to support specific groups of pupils have contributed to developing parents' understanding on how to help their children at home, especially with aspects of literacy and numeracy.

Overall, the school provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel safe in my school.	59	51 86%	3 5%	5 8%	Rwy'n teimlo'n ddiogel yn fy ysgol.
		94%	3%	3%	
The school deals well with any bullying.	60	46 77%	6 10%	8 13%	Mae'r ysgol yn delio'n dda ag unrhyw fwlio.
		84%	10%	6%	
I know who to talk to if I am worried or upset.	59	52 88%	4 7%	3 5%	Rwy'n gwybod pwy i siarad ag ef/â hi os ydw I'n poeni neu'n gofidio.
		92%	4%	4%	
The school teaches me how to keep healthy	58	54 93%	2 3%	2 3%	Mae'r ysgol yn fy nysgu i sut i aros yn iach.
		92%	4%	4%	
There are lots of chances at school for me to get regular exercise.	59	54 92%	3 5%	2 3%	Mae llawer o gyfleoedd yn yr ysgol i mi gael ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		91%	6%	3%	
I am doing well at school	58	56 97%	1 2%	1 2%	Rwy'n gwneud yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		92%	5%	3%	
The teachers and other adults in the school help me to learn and make progress.	57	55 96%	1 2%	1 2%	Mae'r athrawon a'r oedolion eraill yn yr ysgol yn fy helpu i ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd.
		96%	1%	2%	
I know what to do and who to ask if I find my work hard.	56	52 93%	4 7%	0 0%	Rwy'n gwybod beth I'w wneud a gyda phwy i siarad os ydw I'n gweld fy ngwaith yn anodd.
		93%	3%	4%	
My homework helps me to understand and improve my work in school.	46	27 59%	9 20%	10 22%	Mae fy ngwaith cartref yn helpu i mi ddeall a gwella fy ngwaith yn yr ysgol.
		67%	21%	12%	
I have enough books, equipment, and computers to do my work.	55	48 87%	3 5%	4 7%	Mae gen i ddigon o lyfrau, offer a chyfrifiaduron i wneud fy ngwaith.
		90%	5%	4%	
Other children behave well and I can get my work done.	60	48 80%	8 13%	4 7%	Mae plant eraill yn ymddwyn yn dda ac rwy'n gallu gwneud fy ngwaith.
		75%	17%	7%	
Nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time	59	43 73%	13 22%	3 5%	Mae bron pob un o'r plant yn ymddwyn yn dda amser chwarae ac amser cinio.
		82%	14%	5%	

## Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

### Appendix 2

#### The inspection team

Mrs Sw Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Mr Anthony Mulcahy	Team Inspector
Mr William Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
Mrs Jane McCarthy	Team Inspector
Mr Richard Lloyd	Team Inspector
Mrs Catherine Mary Jenkins	Lay Inspector
Mrs Donna Rees Roberts	Peer Inspector
Mrs Julie Nichols	Nominee

## Copies of the report

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

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, 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



## Glossary of ALN terms

**ADHD:** attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

**ALN:** additional learning needs

**ASD:** Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

**ATR:** additional teacher resource

**BESD, ESBD or SEBD:** Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

**CoP:** Code of Practice

**HI:** hearing impairment

**MSI:** multi-sensory impairment

**PMLD:** profound and multiple learning difficulties

**SpLD:** specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

**VI:** visual impairment