



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
The Rofft School
Wynnstay Lane
Marford
Wrexham
LL12 8LA**

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Stephen Dennett

Under Contract 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

The Rofft School is situated in the village of Marford on the outskirts of Wrexham. The majority of the pupils are from the village and the social and economic circumstances of the area are relatively advantaged. At the time of the inspection, there were 263 learners on the school's roll, including 26 children in the nursery. Around 7% of learners are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. The local authority (LA) looks after less than 1% of pupils. Learners enter the school with the full range of abilities, with 12% having additional learning needs (ALN) and 6% having statements of special educational need, which is above local and national averages. The school has a resourced provision (unit) for pupils with social and communications difficulties.

Nearly all learners are from a white British background, although there are a very few from a range of ethnic minorities. Less than 1% of pupils speak English as an additional language and very few speak Welsh at home.

There are currently 11 classes, including the unit. There are 16 teachers with a full-time equivalent of 12.6. The present headteacher was appointed in May 2001. There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection in November 2004 and the internal organization of the building has been altered to accommodate the Foundation Phase and the unit.

The individual school budget per pupil for The Rofft School is £3,744, which compares with a maximum of £9,122 and a minimum of £2,734 for primary schools in Wrexham. The school has the 13th highest budget per pupil out of 62 schools in Wrexham.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is excellent because:

- Pupils in mainstream classes achieved very high standards, especially in English.
- All pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those in the unit, make exceptional progress in their learning.
- The quality of learning experiences and teaching are excellent.
- There is outstanding provision for the care, support and guidance of pupils.
- The overall leadership and management of the school are excellent.
- The school provides excellent value for money.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for further improvement are good because:

- There are good systems for self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- Networks of professional practice are firmly established in the school's work.
- Strategic partnerships are good and make a substantial contribution to the school's overall provision.
- Detailed analysis leads to sharply focused targets for improvement.
- Systems for quality assurance are robust.

Note: The school's prospects for improvement were not judged to be excellent because there is still room for minor improvements in some aspects of provision, even although outcomes for pupils are excellent.

Recommendations

In order to further improve provision at the school the headteacher and governors should:

- R1 Comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Needs and Disability Act 2001) by ensuring there is an appropriate accessibility plan.
- R2 In conjunction with the LA, take steps to improve the outside accommodation in the temporary classrooms.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan to address the recommendations and report progress in dealing with them in its annual report to parents. The school has also been invited to prepare a written case study of not more than 600 words describing its sector-leading practice.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

The school has a unit for pupils with social and communications difficulties and the results of these pupils' assessments are included in the published figures. This gives a distorted view of the school's actual performance, as these pupils attain low standards, particularly in English, as a result of their disabilities. If the results of the pupils in the unit are excluded from the figures, the school's performance against the main indicators over the past three years compare exceptionally well with schools in similar circumstances and pupils' prior attainment. In English and science, pupils' attainment is exceptional with more than half of pupils attaining the higher level 5 at the end of Year 6. Attainment in mathematics is above expectations, with nearly all pupils attaining level 4 and a large minority attaining level 5.

Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are generally above those expected. They make good progress in the Foundation Phase and Year 2. By the end of key stage 1, standards are above national and local averages in all three core subjects (English, mathematics and science). Standards have been maintained at good levels for the past three years. When the figures for pupils in the unit are excluded from the figures, standards are above expectations overall. In English, pupils' attainment is exceptional, with more than half of pupils attaining the higher level 3.

Pupils make excellent progress overall at key stage 2 in core subjects. Progress in English is exceptional, with all pupils making at least 2 National Curriculum (NC) levels progress and 21% making three levels progress. There is no statistical difference in the performance of girls and boys, although in 2010 boys did better than girls at key stage 2 in mathematics. Pupils with ALN make very good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

In lessons, pupils generally make at least good progress and in a minority progress is excellent. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and engage enthusiastically in the activities provided. They achieve high standards in English and mathematics in lessons and use their speaking skills well. Their reading skills are very good and they use them effectively when researching on the internet, for example. Pupils apply their writing skills well to write questions to collect data. Pupils in Year 6 have good basic information and communications technology (ICT) skills. More able pupils have very well developed skills. Pupils use a good range of problem-solving strategies to work out which questions they are going to use as part of their mathematical investigation. Pupils in Year 2 have good problem-solving skills. They discuss their work and plan how they will achieve their objectives. They develop their ideas through discussion and evaluate their work in progress.

Pupils are making good progress in their Welsh language skills. Pupils are developing and understanding a progressively wider vocabulary, they are able to adapt scripts and communicate imaginatively in lessons. Throughout the school pupils make good use of incidental Welsh. Older pupils in key stage 2 understand

and respond well to a range of simple questions and instructions; some give extended answers.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils show a very good awareness of health issues and healthy living. They feel safe and happy in school. Behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. Nearly all the pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. There are no discrepancies regarding the attitudes of the girls and the boys towards their learning. They are interested in their work, sustain concentration and engage in tasks with enthusiasm and endeavour. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible for their own actions and to be sympathetic to the needs of others. 'Effective learning' encourages the pupils to take ownership of their learning and they are confident to make choices about how and what they learn. Over the past three years attendance has been consistently above the LA and national averages.

The school's links with the community are well developed and a strong feature of the school. The school and eco councils are actively involved in making decisions and ensure that pupils' views are heard. Pupils are thoughtful towards each other. They are encouraged to share emotional problems and are given opportunities to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. This ensures a happy and safe environment for learning. The school encourages the pupils to take part in activities in the community. For example, the eco council is involved with IMAGE (Improve Marford and Gresford's environment), and has produced planters of flowers. The school choir performs at various functions as well as local churches. Pupils also are involved in a luncheon club where they serve lunch to the elderly.

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

Learning experiences are good with some excellent provision for pupils to develop their skills through effective learning strategies in mainstream and in the unit. The school meets the needs of pupils exceedingly well and this leads to high standards. An excellent range of enrichment activities and experiences are provided inside and outside school. A thematic approach is used in planning where possible, which enables skills and knowledge to be acquired in context.

Planning for skills is a strength of the school and sector-leading practice, seen in the provision for extending pupils' writing, is well established. Pupils' knowledge of their local area is enhanced through well planned visits and very effective follow up activities such as visits by pupils in key stage 1 to Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, the Lowrie Museum and Erddig. Pupils in key stage 2 benefit from residential stays at Glan-Ilyn and Kingswood as well as worthwhile local visits that are linked well to schemes of work. Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their music and sporting skills in after school clubs, which are well attended.

The provision for extending pupils' Welsh language skills is good and the resources are used effectively to consolidate language patterns. Aspects of Welsh culture are strongly linked with work based on local history, art and music. Legendary figures

such as Dwynwen, eminent Welsh artists such as Kyffin Williams, musicians such as Cerys Mathews and historical figures such as Owain Glyndwr enrich pupils' understanding of their heritage.

All teachers promote pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship successfully. Recycling, energy saving and improving the environment in the school and their community are given priority. As they move up through the school, pupils have good opportunities to develop a good understanding of the wider world.

Teaching: Excellent

The quality of teaching is excellent. An outstanding range of teaching approaches and strategies are used. Lessons are very well matched to the needs of pupils in all classes. Teachers are enthusiastic and pupils are stimulated and motivated to learn and evaluate their work. Teachers and teaching assistants have an excellent rapport with pupils throughout the school. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are to learn and how their learning will be assessed at the end of the lesson. They have high expectations of the pupils. In a positive learning environment, teachers promote and extend pupils' learning through the use of very effective questioning skills. Both teachers and pupils make good use of interactive whiteboards as a teaching resource, however occasionally teachers' do not give pupils enough opportunities to use computers in the classroom to support their learning across the curriculum.

Assessment is used effectively to track pupils' progress and to provide them with tasks that are well matched to their needs. Pupils are adept at assessing their own and others' work. Staff have been effectively involved with the 'cluster' schools in the standardisation and moderation process, which has led to clear assessment strategies. Marking is detailed and good quality feedback is given to pupils as regards to what they need to do to improve their written work, which is generally of a very high standard. Detailed annual reports and parents' evenings ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school has a very well structured provision for wellbeing and the promotion of healthy living. Many initiatives in the healthy schools scheme have had a positive effect on the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils foster values of honesty and fairness and they know the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to take responsibilities in the school, especially in Year 6. Class discussions are used effectively to manage the pupil's feelings and self-awareness. The teaching of personal and social education features extensively across all aspects of the curriculum, especially in the Foundation Phase.

There are appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. All staff have been trained effectively and receive relevant support and guidance. The school collaborates very well with specialist services. They are used to promote access to a wide range of information and additional support for pupils and parents

The school provides excellent provision for additional learning needs. This is a sector-leading feature of the school, especially in the unit. One of the unit teachers has been recognised by the LA as an outstanding practitioner and the other has outstanding expertise in supporting pupils with autism. There are very effective procedures for identifying pupils' needs and targeted support is closely matched. Support staff are deployed skilfully and make excellent contributions to the progress of the pupils. As a result pupils make excellent progress.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a fully-inclusive community where diversity is recognised and celebrated. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and values as well as those of others. Pupils have positive attitudes to diversity, and the school's inclusive ethos is a significant strength. The school actively promotes equal opportunities and all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision. The school offers a safe and welcoming environment for all learners.

The accommodation is well maintained and sufficient for the number of pupils. Classrooms are decorated with stimulating informative displays that encourage and support learning. Full use is made of resources, which are ample, of good quality and well matched to pupils needs. However there are two temporary classrooms that are in very poor condition and in need of replacing.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Excellent

Leadership: Excellent

The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, senior staff and governing body are excellent. There are a number of sector-leading aspects to the school's work, including the Foundation Phase, provision in the unit and the 'effective learning' strategy. The school has successfully promoted very high standards, especially in English. All staff share a common vision for improvement and the ethos is excellent throughout the school. The highly effective monitoring of teaching and learning means that a significant proportion of teaching is exemplary and teachers have been involved with the LA in promoting sector-leading practice in other schools. The school is very well run on a day-to-day basis and administrative procedures run smoothly.

The governing body make a good contribution to the running of the school through a good range of appropriate committees that oversee the school's work effectively. Governors show determination in challenging and supporting the professional management in bringing about necessary improvements. All policies and legal requirements are carried out consistently. However, the governing body does not meet the legal requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act by having a suitable accessibility plan.

The school takes good account of local and national initiatives. It has made excellent progress in implementing the Foundation Phase and has been used by the LA as an example of sector-leading practice. The implementation of the 'skills framework' is progressing very well and pupils are fully aware of the key skills they are using in lessons.

Improving quality: Good

The school's procedures for ensuring quality improvement are good. Self-evaluation and developmental planning is a regular part of the school's working life. There is a good focus on identifying priorities for improvement, monitoring provision and assessing outcomes for pupils. Processes are rigorous and involve all aspects of the school's activities. The school is managed effectively on the basis of an accurate assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. Managers use the information from the self-evaluation process to set relevant priorities and challenging targets for improvement.

The school has dealt successfully with the recommendations of the last inspection. Planning for key skills is now very good and clearly identified in all lesson plans. Teachers have an improved understanding of NC levels and have produced useful portfolios of levelled work to help them in this. Pupils have an increasingly good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Communications with parents has improved and most parents say they now know how well their children are progressing.

There are a number of professional learning communities in the school, which are helping to improve provision and raise standards. Staff are supported very well by an effective system for continuous professional development. The school also has

strong links with the local cluster of schools and has run various training events, as well as participating in training run by other providers.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership links are good. Pupils benefit from the wide range of strategies that engage parents' help in focusing on pupils' standards of achievement and wellbeing. The school consults parents on a wide range of practices and guidance opportunities. Parents receive a good range of information about the work of the school and their children's progress. The school collaborates well with partners to plan and manage provision. The school has good links with a range of local employers and has established initiatives with outside organisations, which help to raise pupils' expectations. It benefits from well-established links with Bangor University, local colleges, secondary schools and a range of support services. The school has extensive links with its secondary and partner schools and has well established and effective transition arrangements which enable pupils to settle quickly and promote continuity in learning and wellbeing. The school makes good use of information to ensure support for pupils on the basis of their individual needs. The school has effectively utilised the community, local business area and sporting organisations as a resource to extend the learning experiences of pupils.

Resource management: Excellent

The school has efficient and effective strategies in place for managing staff and resources. Staff are deployed prudently to best utilise their expertise and experience. There are appropriate arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time, but the formal monitoring of this is at an early stage of development. Teaching assistants are deployed very efficiently throughout the school and make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning and wellbeing. The school is very well resourced and used successfully to ensure the best possible learning experiences for the children.

Finances are exceptionally well managed and spending decisions are matched closely to the schools priorities. The governing body are directly involved in budget planning. They meet regularly to review and plan spending. Careful consideration is given to long-term implications. The school gives excellent value for money in terms of outcomes for pupils and its use of funding.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

All parents say they were satisfied with the school and that their child enjoys his or her education. All parents think that the school cares for their children well and they are kept safe. A few parents did not think that homework builds well on what pupils learn in school and a smaller number thought there are not enough school trips. Inspectors judge that the amount and range of homework is appropriate. They also judge that the visits make a positive contribution to pupils' learning experiences.

Responses to learner questionnaires

All learners say they felt safe in school and that teachers help them learn well. Most say that they are doing well in school and know what to do if they find their work hard. A minority say that some children do not behave well in lessons or in the playground and that bullying is not always dealt with effectively. The team found that learners were referring to a few pupils from the unit, no longer at the school that had caused some problems in the past. Behaviour is now never less than good and bullying is dealt with effectively.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Stephen Dennett	Reporting Inspector
Audrey Evans	Team Inspector
Helen Adams	Lay Inspector
Andrew Jones	Peer Inspector
Geraint Morris	School Nominee

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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