



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

A report on

**Rhos Street C.P. School
Ffordd Glasdir
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1QQ**

Date of inspection: November 2018

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Rhos Street C.P. School

Rhos Street Community Primary School is on the edge of Ruthin in Denbighshire. The school moved into a new building in April 2018 on the site that it shares with a Welsh-medium primary school, Ysgol Pen Barras.

The headteacher has been in post since April 2009. The school was last inspected in March 2013.

The school has 198 pupils aged from 3 to 11, including 29 who attend the nursery class part-time. There are eight single-age classes.

Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language. A very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 9%. This is well below the Welsh average of 18%. The school has identified approximately 13% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is well below the Welsh average of 21%. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

This is a high achieving school. Strong, sustained leadership helped to uphold exemplary standards during the recent move to new, purpose-built premises. Leaders, teachers and governors work together extremely well for the benefit of the pupils. There is a cohesive link between monitoring, self-evaluation, improvement planning and target-setting activities. This underpins the school's work and its strong record of improvement.

Pupils achieve extremely well, particularly in English, literacy across the curriculum and mathematics. They enjoy their learning very much, for example in the well-resourced outdoor area in the foundation phase or in the stimulating 'living classroom'. Consistent teaching of good quality and strong systems for care, support and guidance ensure that all pupils behave well, feel safe and make very good progress.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Develop the opportunities for pupils to make choices and decisions about what and how they learn

R2 Improve the provision for ICT

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to using a 'golden thread' to align self-evaluation, improvement planning and accountability processes, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

Most pupils start school in the nursery or reception classes with skills in line with those expected for their age and stage of development. A few pupils start school with skills above those expected. Across the foundation phase, nearly all pupils make very strong progress in developing their skills, especially in oracy, reading, writing and mathematics. As they move through key stage 2, nearly all pupils build well on this firm foundation. As a result, nearly all pupils leave the school with skills at least in line with those expected for their age, and a majority leave with skills above those expected. The few pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress in line with their peers.

Nearly all pupils make excellent progress in developing their oracy skills. In the reception class, for instance, pupils are keen to welcome visitors to their Indian restaurant, where they explain the menu and prepare a bill. By Year 2, most pupils can reason out loud, debating for example whether superheroes ever really get scared. By Year 6, most pupils are confident and eloquent presenters, for instance when addressing the whole school in assembly. They connect with their audience, speak fluently and use a wide, well-chosen vocabulary.

Nearly all pupils develop strong reading skills. From the nursery class and across the foundation phase, nearly all pupils learn the sounds that letters make. They quickly recognise familiar words and learn strategies to work out words that are not familiar. By the end of Year 6, nearly all are independent readers who enjoy books and read regularly for pleasure. They can draw inferences from the texts they read, and make well-reasoned deductions, for instance by reading 'between the lines'. Across the school, pupils use their reading skills highly effectively in a wide range of contexts.

Many pupils make outstanding progress in developing their writing skills. Across the foundation phase, progress is rapid. In the nursery, pupils quickly develop their phonological awareness of letters and sounds. By the reception class, most pupils form their letters correctly and, with support, write simple sentences about themselves. By Year 2, many write a set of instructions independently, for example to explain how to cross the road safely as part of their kerbcraft work. By key stage 2, most pupils write effectively, both in English lessons and across the curriculum. They write with flair, and have a good understanding and appreciation of audience and purpose. For example, when they write poetry, pupils use imaginative and figurative language highly effectively and, when writing formal letters, they convey their messages crisply and precisely. By Year 6, more able pupils in particular write extended pieces of well-constructed, engaging fiction, using powerful vocabulary to build suspense and to develop twists to the plot. This is a notable strength of the school.

Most pupils make strong progress in learning Welsh during the foundation phase. They learn simple vocabulary, respond confidently to basic questions and sing songs in Welsh. As they move through key stage 2, most pupils make appropriate progress. They answer simple questions confidently using the language patterns

that they have learnt to structure their answers. Most read simple texts fluently, showing suitable understanding, and they write appropriately, using a framework as a prompt. Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning the language, and understand the advantages of speaking another language confidently.

Throughout the foundation phase, nearly all pupils develop a very strong understanding of number, shape, measures and data. They solve problems systematically. Most are beginning to apply their early numeracy skills well in their topics and during their outdoor learning activities. Across key stage 2, nearly all pupils work methodically and to a very high standard in mathematics. They calculate accurately, using a wide range of mental methods and written calculations. Most pupils develop a rapid recall of times tables and other number facts. By the end of Year 6, a minority of pupils have excellent mathematical skills. They reason and solve problems confidently. When they have suitable opportunities, most apply their numeracy skills well, for example in science when representing and analysing data they have recorded from an investigation.

Most pupils develop strong skills in information and communications technology (ICT). They communicate effectively, for example typing instead of writing their work, and use the internet confidently and safely to research age-appropriate information. In the foundation phase, most use a programmable toy competently, for example to instruct a car with directions to find Goldilocks' house. When the provision allows, most pupils in key stage 2 use software to draw graphs and charts, and to interrogate databases.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils behave very well within lessons and when moving around the school. They are polite, well-mannered and considerate of one another.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. They know where to go if they are worried and they feel confident that staff will listen to any concerns they raise and deal with them promptly. The digital leaders provide valuable support, particularly for younger pupils using the internet. As a result, nearly all pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe online.

Many pupils readily take on leadership roles in a variety of groups, such as Criw Cymraeg and the eco-council. These give pupils a prominent voice and enable them to have a positive effect on school life and the wellbeing of other pupils. For instance, following a request from a pupil, the school council considered the arrangements to promote football across the school. As a result, they approached Chester Football Club who then provided football coaching and opportunities for both boys and girls to enjoy the game.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most concentrate well in lessons and stay on task, particularly when the work interests them. Many persevere for extended periods, for example, when writing stories. Many pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and they are beginning to find ways to improve their own work independently.

When pupils have the opportunity, they make sensible choices and enjoy the opportunity to extend their learning, for example when planning their 'French Day'. However, across the school, pupils do not decide what and how they learn often enough.

Nearly all pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They take part in regular exercise, which helps them to understand the benefits of physical activity on their health. Many take part in a broad range of extra-curricular activities, such as rock choir, art club and 'go ride' that benefit them physically and contribute effectively to their general wellbeing.

Most pupils are confident when faced with new situations or people. For instance, pupils in key stage 2 took part in the 'shocktober' project to raise awareness of cardiac arrest. As a result, they raised funds for a defibrillator and then presented the project on the television channel S4C. This helped pupils' self-confidence and improved their knowledge and understanding of health issues.

Attendance has improved since the last inspection and most pupils attend school regularly.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

In all classes, teachers provide purposeful and relevant learning experiences for their pupils within a broad and balanced curriculum.

Across the school, many teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Classrooms are well organised and nearly all teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. Most teachers ask well-chosen questions that encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. They provide regular feedback to pupils to praise their efforts.

Where teaching is most effective, staff use a range of interesting approaches and strategies to engage pupils. Learning is often practical, and teachers encourage pupils' independent learning successfully. In the best examples, teachers find out what pupils want to learn. For example, in the 'global cafe', teachers provide opportunities for their pupils to work together to agree an entrepreneurial, sustainable project, which the pupils plan and deliver.

Generally, teachers plan tasks that are well suited to pupils' starting points. However, occasionally, the activities that teachers plan do not challenge all pupils to achieve their best. On a few occasions, teachers talk for too long and over-direct pupils' activities. When this happens, a minority of pupils lose interest, because there are too few opportunities for them to make decisions and to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers in the foundation phase plan imaginative activities of good quality across most areas of learning. In these classes, teachers have embraced the principles of the foundation phase pedagogy. For instance, pupils have free and open access to a well-planned outside area, which provides stimulating and interesting opportunities for them to explore, experiment and immerse themselves in their learning. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their physical and problem solving

skills, for example through building a nest for the owl babies. There is a careful balance between adult-led and independent, child-led activities. Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively to plan and to support pupils' learning, and, as a result, pupils in the foundation phase make strong, and occasionally rapid, progress.

Teachers across the school deliver worthwhile and interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills systematically across the curriculum and through many purposeful activities outside of designated lessons. For example, the popular before-school reading club provides additional reading practice of high quality for foundation phase pupils, and a valuable opportunity for older pupils to work with younger pupils.

The opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills to the same high standards as literacy are not as well developed. In ICT, the move to new premises has meant that the school has needed to adapt their provision and equipment, for instance to provide a new learning platform. These changes have limited teachers' capacity to deliver progressive and systematic provision over recent time.

The school has worked purposefully to raise the profile of Welsh culture and heritage in the curriculum, for example through learning about Welsh artists, 'Proud to be Welsh' assemblies, and studying Welsh landmarks. As a result, most pupils have a good awareness of their Welsh identity. Most staff use the Welsh language confidently throughout the day. However, the opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills independently, outside of Welsh lessons, are limited.

There are beneficial trips to places linked to curriculum topics. For example, pupils have visited Moel Famau and Ruthin, and worked with local artists and sporting organisations. These activities further enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Staff promote a welcoming and inclusive ethos that promotes respect and celebrates individual differences. For example, the school welcomed pupils from the recently closed Ysgol Rhewl, and ensured their smooth transfer into their new school.

Leaders use a rigorous system to track all pupils' progress and to ensure that they remain on track to achieve challenging targets. There are effective systems to intervene if pupils are at risk of falling behind. For instance, a range of valuable interventions, delivered by skilled teaching assistants, enables these pupils to catch up with their peers. The annual target-setting process is rigorous and aspirational, holding teachers appropriately to account for the progress of pupils in their class.

There are useful systems to monitor and co-ordinate support for pupils with identified additional needs. The recently appointed co-ordinator tracks the progress of this group of pupils carefully, and ensures that the provision meets their needs well. Class teachers devise individual development plans (IDPs) for these pupils, and for those who receive additional support because they are more able. Targets in these plans are generally smart and achievable. However, the involvement of pupils and their parents in routinely reviewing the progress that pupils make against existing targets or helping to set new targets for achievement varies too much across the school.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take part in productions and performances, for example through family services, Christmas productions and carol services. Many pupils learn musical instruments, and the school provides a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. For example, the rock choir performs at local events, such as the Christmas lights event in Ruthin. This strengthens the links between the school and the local community. Acts of collective worship promote pupils' spiritual and moral development well. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to use their well-developed oracy skills to reason and to ask thought provoking questions, for example in Year 5, where the teacher posed the question, 'Did Neil Armstrong really land on the moon?'

Pupils increasingly have opportunities to contribute their creative ideas, for example to develop the environment around the nearby 'living classroom'. This provision promotes their role as active citizens who work together as teams to benefit their local community. Together, pupils consider solutions to problems related to the environment, for example to support plants and wildlife. This provision fosters their curiosity and engagement with the natural world particularly well.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, for example through the eco-committee who promote the school grounds and the living classroom. The school's provision ensures that nearly all pupils understand the likely impact of sensible lifestyle choices. The school promotes healthy eating and drinking appropriately.

Newsletters and the active social media accounts provide helpful information to parents about the life of the school. There are biannual parents' evenings, and teachers write detailed annual reports of pupils' achievements and progress.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The headteacher's leadership is strong, inspiring, and energetic. It ensures that the school's culture focuses rigorously on raising standards. The headteacher has a passionate and clear vision for the school, which he communicates well to all staff and governors. They have embraced the headteacher's purposeful vision enthusiastically. The high expectations they have for pupils derive from firm educational values, a strong moral purpose and ambitious objectives for all pupils. These well-embedded features of leadership at all levels within the school have a very positive effect on pupils' progress and standards.

The headteacher receives effective support from a highly skilled senior leadership team. Their effective, professional leadership ensures high standards and expectations for all pupils. The school team, supported by the proactive governing body, has sustained high pupil standards exceptionally well during the recent process of relocating the school to a new, purpose-built site. Leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities exemplified in detailed job descriptions. They ensure appropriate staff accountability through a thorough performance management process.

A notable feature of the school's work is the way the governing body provides constructive support, challenge and valuable professional expertise in specific areas of the school's work. Their strategic input into all areas of school procedures is highly effective. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance through the dedicated work of the sub-committees and provide effective challenge to leaders on the impact of school improvement actions.

The school has a highly effective culture of continuous self-evaluation, which focuses clearly on pupils' outcomes. There is a comprehensive development plan that focuses well on the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and includes precise details about the school's main priorities. Detailed plans and actions for improvement support school development priorities effectively. Actions are clearly identified with a 'strategic golden thread system' weaving through all areas to ensure robust accountability for all stakeholders. Leaders adapt the targets for improvement to ensure that they are accessible to pupils. These priorities are on display around the school and are clear to all stakeholders. The school shares a summary of the priorities with parents at the beginning of the academic year. A particularly innovative aspect of the school's work is its use of social media to share progress with all stakeholders by using individual hashtags in relation to the different priorities.

There is a structured programme of monitoring and review activities, which leaders undertake effectively. However on a few occasions the focus of monitoring is too broad to identify precisely what needs to improve. Most staff work collaboratively to evaluate pupils' standards and the effectiveness of the provision. Overall, the monitoring and review processes are very successful in terms of enabling leaders to evaluate the school's performance effectively, and to target and challenge all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.

Leaders encourage all members of staff to develop professionally and collaboratively within their roles. A majority of teachers have been members of professional learning groups to enhance the provision in school, for example, to develop provision for more able and talented pupils in mathematics and to develop the outdoor foundation phase provision further. On a few occasions, teaching assistants also have opportunities to visit other providers, for example to develop their expertise in delivering intervention programmes. These opportunities have had a very positive impact on the standards that most pupils achieve.

The school works closely in partnership with the parent teacher association, which provides significant additional funding to enhance the provision further. Leaders make effective use of the pupil development grant to improve standards of literacy and numeracy for potentially vulnerable pupils, in addition to providing valuable support for pupils' emotional wellbeing.

The school has a good range of resources and leaders ensure skilful use of the budget to improve the provision. Expenditure links directly to the priorities in the school development plan. Leaders manage and monitor spending well. For example, the governors' buildings and finance committee have overseen the school's budget prudently during the move to the new site.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses 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:

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