



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

**Lixwm C.P. School
Fford Gledlom
Lixwm
Holywell
Flintshire
CH8 8NF**

Date of inspection: February 2012

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:

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

Lixwm Community Primary School was founded in 1847 and serves the rural villages and surrounding area of Lixwm and Ysceifiog near Holywell in Flintshire. The current building was remodelled in 1988. The majority of pupils are from the surrounding locality, which is relatively economically advantaged.

There are currently 70 pupils on roll aged three to 11. Around 6% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. About 15% of the pupils have additional learning needs and 1% have statements of special educational need. English is the home language of nearly all pupils and no pupils are fluent in Welsh. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. No pupils have been excluded in the past year. Since the school's last inspection in February 2006, the number on roll has risen slightly and the present headteacher was appointed in November 2008.

The individual school budget per pupil for Lixwm Community Primary School in 2011-2012 means the budget is £3,565 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Flintshire is £10,075 and the minimum is £2,616. Lixwm Community Primary School is 23th out of 76 primary schools in Flintshire in terms of its budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- outcomes for pupils are good and they make rapid progress in all lessons and through the school;
- standards in reading and mathematics are above the expected level at the end of Year 6;
- most pupils are polite, work together effectively and behave well;
- the quality of teaching is consistently good and pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning;
- pupils' achievement in Welsh is very good as a result of the very effective promotion of Welsh language and culture;
- the school council and eco committee contribute very strongly to pupils' involvement in the community and the school's decision-making processes; and
- education for sustainable development and global citizenship is good and pupils are very well informed about ecological issues.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a strong vision for the future development of the school which everyone shares;
- the quality of teamwork is good, based on an open leadership style and the effective distribution of leadership roles at all levels;
- the self-evaluation process is rooted in wide-ranging consultations, the first-hand monitoring of standards, and the analysis of data and pupils' work by senior managers and governors;
- the school is taking good account of local and national priorities; and
- a professional learning community is helping to improve standards effectively.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- R1 improve standards in writing by ensuring that pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation skills are consistently good throughout the school;
- R2 ensure that teaching methods take better account of the ways in which pupils learn to develop their social and life skills further; and
- R3 ensure that the school prospectus meets statutory requirements.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Compared with their starting points on entry to the school, pupils' achievement in learning is good and nearly all pupils make at least the expected progress when their ability is taken into account. Around half the pupils make better than expected progress. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with additional learning needs and those entitled to free school meals make similar progress to their peers.

The small year groups mean that the school's statistics vary greatly from year to year. In 2011, the school's performance when compared to that of its family of schools shows that it performed above the level expected at the end of the Foundation Phase. This was a significant improvement from 2009. At the end of key stage 2, the school performed below the expected level in English when compared with the family of schools, but above the expected level in mathematics and science. However, 40% of this cohort had special educational needs, mainly relating to literacy. Despite this, standards improved between 2010 and 2011. Current standards in English and mathematics are above the expected level overall at the end of Year 6, although standards in mathematics are stronger than in English.

Most pupils recall their prior learning well and use this purposefully to acquire new knowledge and skills. Nearly all pupils work together well and respond appropriately to the tasks and questions posed by teachers. Most pupils use their thinking and communication skills effectively throughout the school. In the Foundation Phase, pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well. They speak confidently and many use a growing vocabulary in both English and Welsh. Many pupils in key stage 2 listen well in lessons, although a few lose concentration quickly and need to be brought back to the task in hand. Most pupils speak clearly using a good range of vocabulary to communicate their ideas and opinions. When explaining their feelings about preserving the environment, they show good reasoning skills and empathy with the issues involved.

Most pupils are enthusiastic readers and their skills are developing well through the Foundation Phase. They have a good understanding of letters and their sounds and use this knowledge effectively to read words. Most pupils in key stage 2 read an increasing range of texts confidently and with enjoyment. Nearly all of the most able pupils read with expression and predict what will happen next in a story. They have clear opinions about a range of authors and refer to specific sections of text to support their views. Nearly all pupils use their reading skills effectively to access other areas of the curriculum, such as selecting books for their project on the 1930s.

From the Foundation Phase, most pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. Their ability to express themselves in writing is well developed and they have an increasingly interesting and imaginative vocabulary. Nearly all of the more able pupils write in a wide range of genres and styles, such as formal letters to a bank

manager asking for a loan for a business. These show a good ability to express themselves and to order their arguments cohesively. However, standards of spelling and handwriting very too much at key stage 2. Some very good examples of writing are found in most classes but there are too many occasions when pupils misspell common words. Many pupils are developing a clear and fluent handwriting style, but a minority produce work that is untidy and poorly formed. Most pupils use their writing skills effectively in other areas of the curriculum, although their presentation is not always as tidy as it should be.

Standards in Welsh are good considering the pupils' linguistic background. Most pupils respond enthusiastically in Welsh lessons and progress well as they move through the school. Towards the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve good and very good standards.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents are particularly positive that the school provides a secure and very happy learning environment. Pupils' attendance is good at above 95%, which is higher than local and national averages. Unauthorised absences are also lower than average. Pupils arrive punctually at the school and at their lessons.

Pupils throughout the school have a very good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They have positive attitudes towards physical exercise and sporting activities as well as improving their diet. Behaviour is good and pupils are courteous and polite to adults. Most pupils have well developed social and life skills. Nearly all pupils are motivated in lessons and work well. However, in some classes a few pupils lose concentration when teaching is not well matched to their learning needs. From a young age, pupils take responsibility for managing each other's behaviour by drawing up a code of conduct. This ensures that the school operates smoothly and any low level of disruption is dealt with by implementing agreed sanctions.

The school council and eco-committee play a very active and significant part in many aspects of school life as they implement an agreed action plan, which they review regularly. They choose equipment to be used at playtimes in response to pupils' requests.

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

The school has a good range of learning experiences that meets pupils' needs well. It employs a wide range of intervention strategies to support pupils of all abilities and to develop their basic skills and wellbeing effectively. Planning clearly identifies how pupils' thinking, communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills will be developed. Activities give pupils regular, appropriate opportunities for them to use and practise their skills and build well on their prior learning. Provision for Welsh language development is good and the promotion of the Welsh dimension is evident in the school's everyday life. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that pupils receive appropriate challenges. Teachers revise and

reinforce language patterns to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The Welsh dimension is a strong feature at the school. The school places a good emphasis on sustainable development and global citizenship. Lessons give pupils the opportunities to discuss subjects such as greenhouse gases and their effect on the ozone layer. The eco committee is also influential in ensuring that the school acts in a sustainable way and is currently raising funds for solar panels and monitoring endangered species.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. There are strong relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults. This results in a positive environment for learning and pupils clearly enjoy their time in school and the subjects they are studying. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well as a team and this ensures that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods, although they do not always take sufficient account of the different ways in which some pupils learn. This occasionally leads to a few pupils becoming disengaged, resulting in low-level disruption. Most work is sufficiently challenging and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well.

Teachers assess pupils' work and track their progress effectively throughout the school. They use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants give clear and helpful oral feedback and most pupils assess their own learning well. Marking in books is constructive and identifies what pupils need to do to improve, using 'two stars and a wish' as a framework. Good links with other schools for moderation and standardisation have improved the accuracy of assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. Annual reports to parents are informative and provide a clear indication of the next steps their children need to take in their learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes pupils' welfare effectively. Appropriate emphasis is placed on a healthy diet and physical activities to promote pupils' physical wellbeing. The provision for health, safety and hygiene is good. There are good learning experiences to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including effective opportunities to learn about other beliefs. There are clear induction procedures for new pupils and well-established procedures to ensure smooth transfer of pupils at the end of key stage 2. The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

There is well-planned provision for pupils with additional learning needs, and support is co-ordinated effectively. The school works well in partnership with external agencies and specialist services to ensure that all pupils' needs are met well. Pupils' individual education plans are appropriate for those needing additional needs and for those who are more able. Plans are reviewed and updated regularly with appropriate input from stakeholders, including parents and external agencies. Teaching assistants provide very good support to pupils ensuring access to all areas of the curriculum. The work of pupils with additional learning needs in classes is monitored regularly.

Learning environment: Good

The school has an inclusive ethos and there is a clear emphasis on respecting diversity. Various cultural themes are threaded through the curriculum, such as a study of the Chinese New Year, which is written in Welsh. The school cultivates a tolerant attitude in pupils. The school is good at ensuring support for pupils with additional learning needs and they thrive in the positive environment. The good learning environment and available resources are use effectively to enrich the curriculum and pupils' learning experiences. The accommodation is well maintained and provides a stimulating learning environment.

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

The school is led well and the headteacher provides a strong sense of direction. She has successfully established a culture where staff strive for improvement. Additional responsibilities for staff are clearly defined and well balanced. Teaching staff with leadership roles carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and their work supports school improvement priorities effectively. The staff work well together as a close team. The process of performance management for all staff is established securely. The use of data to monitor performance is well developed.

Governors carry out their role effectively. They are well informed about developments in the school. The chair of the governing body works closely with the headteacher, visits school regularly and ensures that the work of the governing body is well organised and purposeful. Governors have a good understanding of performance data and use this well to challenge the school to do better. The school's prospectus provides useful information for parents, but does not contain statutory information about provision for disability.

The school takes appropriate account of national and local priorities. Work on developing the use of the Welsh language has had a positive effect on raising standards. Good use has been made of the School Effectiveness Framework to support the school's professional learning communities and to develop pupils' involvement in the running of the school.

Improving quality: Good

There is a strong commitment throughout the school to promoting improvement. The school has well-established and systematic procedures for self-evaluation, which include the regular use of first-hand evidence obtained through extensive monitoring of provision and standards by staff and governors. The school takes good account of the views of parents, and pupils play a very active role in evaluating the running of the school. The school's self-evaluation report is comprehensive and detailed. It contains a thorough analysis of performance data and recognises a considerable number of strengths the work of the school. It also identifies accurately areas where improvements are needed.

The school's improvement and development plans are securely based on the outcomes of self-evaluation. They focus appropriately on raising standards in key areas and contain specific actions and clear targets. Progress in addressing the targets for improvement is monitored carefully and actions taken lead to measureable improvements. The established work of a professional learning community within the school has successfully contributed to developing pupils' involvement in their own learning. There is good provision for supporting the professional development of all staff and this frequently involves close collaborative working with other schools.

The sharing of good practice in the school is promoted well. Teaching staff are increasing their professional knowledge by undertaking monitoring activities, including lesson observations in other classes in the school. They are increasingly using the information gained to evaluate the effect of teachers' professional development on pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

The school has effective links with a range of partnerships that make a considerable contribution to improving outcomes for pupils. Its partnership with parents is good and they feel welcome in school and are kept well informed. Pupils benefit from the school's well established links with the community, which includes their involvement in local projects and fund raising work for charities.

The school responds well to advice and guidance from the local authority and acts upon recommendations made. The school's partnership with the local authority has included work on developing the Foundation Phase and involvement in the healthy school's initiative. Actions taken as a result of involvement with the local authority have improved pupils' standards and wellbeing. The school plays an active role in local initiatives which frequently involves working closely with local schools. Currently this includes developing the provision of additional activities for pupils who are identified as more able.

Detailed transition plans and joint activities support pupils' smooth transition to secondary school. The school takes advantage of opportunities to share resources with other small schools in the locality which includes the use of shared transport on outings and hosting visits by neighbouring schools to share school events.

Resource management: Good

The school uses its budget effectively to support improvements in pupils' learning. Teaching and non-teaching staff are deployed well. Partnerships with other schools and volunteers within the schools enrich the curriculum. Overall, the quality of the school's provision and the standards achieved by pupils are good. The school offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

This is a small school and the numbers in each year group vary from year to year, making accurate statistical analysis difficult.

In 2011, standard at key stage 1 in English, mathematics and science were above the family (a group of schools that face similar levels of challenge), local authority and national averages. Compared to those of schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were in the lower 50% for English and mathematics; they were in the lowest 25% for science. In English, mathematics and science combined (the core subject indicator) they were in the lower 50% compared to those of similar schools. Standards improved sharply between 2010 and 2011 and the overall trend is upward. However, over the last four years, standards in the core subject indicator have been in the lowest 25% compared with those of similar schools.

At key stage 2, standards in English, mathematics and science were above the family, local authority and national averages. Compared to those of similar schools, standards were in the top 25% for mathematics and science and in the lower 50% for English and the core subject indicator. The overall trend was broadly upwards between 2009 and 2011. Over the past four years standards in the core subject indicator have been in the lower 50% compared with those of similar schools.

Girls generally outperform boys at both key stages, except in mathematics and science at key stage 2, where there is no significant difference. At key stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was high in English, mathematics and science. In English at key stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was below the family and local authority levels, and close to the national level. In mathematics and science it was below in all three indicators. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals perform above the family, local authority and national levels in the core subject indicator.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to the questionnaire for parents

There were 20 responses from parents and they unanimously state that:

- they are satisfied with the school;
- their child likes school;
- their child was helped to settle in well when he or she started school;
- their child is making good progress;
- behaviour in the school is good;
- teaching is good;
- staff expect their child to do his or her best;
- their child is encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise;
- their child is safe in school
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress; and
- the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility.

Most parents state that:

- homework builds well on what their child learns in school;
- staff treat their child fairly and respect;
- their child received appropriate additional support when necessary;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems;
- there is a good range of activities, including trips or visits; and
- the school is well run.

A few do not know or state that:

- they do not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints; and
- they do not think their child is well prepared for moving on to their next school.

Responses to the questionnaire for pupils

There were 48 responses from pupils and they unanimously state that:

- the school deals well with bullying;
- they know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- the school teaches them how to keep healthy;
- there are lots of chances for them to get regular exercise;
- teachers help them to learn and make progress; and
- they know what to do if they find their work hard.

Nearly all pupils state that:

- they feel safe in school;
- they are doing well in school;
- homework helps them understand and improve their work in school; and
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Just under half of the responses state that:

- other children do not always behave well and sometimes this stops them getting on with their work.

A few pupils state that:

- other children do not behave well at playtime and lunch time.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Stephen Dennett	Reporting Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Susan Owen	Lay Inspector
Linda Williams	Peer Inspector
Catherine Howarth	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

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' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 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	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	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:

Foundation Phase	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 terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.