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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**St George Controlled Primary School
Primrose Hill
St George
Abergele
Conwy
LL22 9BU**

Date of inspection: April 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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Publication date: 29/06/2012

Context

St George Controlled Primary School is in the small village of St George, about three miles from Abergele. Pupils attend from a wide area, including the local village and its outlying areas. Many pupils live outside the school's traditional catchment area.

Currently 72 pupils attend the school, 12 of whom attend nursery on a part-time basis. Numbers have remained stable over the past few years. The school is organised into three mixed age classes. No pupil speaks Welsh as a first language or receives support for English as an additional language. No pupils come from an ethnic-minority community.

Pupils are drawn from a social background which is neither prosperous nor socially disadvantaged. Four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is significantly lower than the local authority and all-Wales averages. Eighteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs, which is also well below the local authority average. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. No pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2010. At the time of the inspection three members of staff were on maternity leave and the headteacher was absent due to illness. As there were no members of staff with leadership responsibility currently working at the school, the local authority arranged for a member of staff from another school to take on the role of acting headteacher. The acting headteacher has been at the school since January 2012.

The school currently has no school hall and has been identified as part of the local authority modernisation programme.

The individual school budget per pupil for St George Controlled Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,754 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Conwy is £13,941 and the minimum is £2,935. St George Controlled Primary School is 35th out of the 61 primary schools in Conwy in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall judgement on the school's performance is judged to be adequate. The school's strengths are that:

- the majority of pupils achieve good standards in many aspects of their work;
- pupils are very well behaved, relate well to others and are keen to learn;
- there is a caring ethos within the school, with all staff providing good support and guidance for pupils; and
- there is effective support for pupils with additional learning needs.

However:

- more able pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable;
- teaching frequently does not provide sufficient challenge for pupils;
- planning for the delivery of the curriculum lacks a consistent approach; and
- assessment information is not used well enough to inform future planning.

Prospects for improvement

The overall judgement for prospects for improvement is adequate. The school's strengths are that:

- the acting headteacher provides good leadership for the school and is well supported by all staff;
- governors undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively;
- action taken as a result of school improvement planning has resulted in raising standards in reading and Welsh; and
- the school has fostered good partnerships with parents.

However:

- a rigorous system for monitoring teaching and learning is not in place and consequently the self-evaluation report does not clearly identify all the areas which need improvement;
- the process of self-evaluation has not been used to inform the school improvement plan; and
- the school has made limited progress in addressing a few of the recommendations from the last inspection.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in extended and imaginative writing;
- R2 improve the standards of and provision for more able pupils;
- R3 improve the consistency and quality of planning and teaching;
- R4 make effective use of assessment information; and
- R5 ensure that the process of self-evaluation is based on a rigorous system of monitoring and strengthen the link between the outcomes of self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

What happens next?

St George Primary School will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by Estyn.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

The skills of the majority of pupils when starting school are above the average for the local authority and Wales. During their time in school the majority of pupils make good progress. However, more able pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable and too few pupils achieve the higher level in English at the end of both key stages.

Pupils' communication skills generally develop well across the school. In the Foundation Phase, many pupils are confident speakers. As they move through the school they develop the ability to listen carefully and attentively to staff and each other. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils speak clearly and confidently. Many provide thoughtful and often lengthy responses, using suitable terms and vocabulary.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase talk enthusiastically about books and their favourite stories. They handle books as a reader and the more able read simple texts accurately. They generally make good use of their knowledge of sounds to help them to read words with which they are not familiar. Many pupils at the end of key stage 2 use an appropriate range of reading strategies and read with fluency and expression, paying attention to punctuation. However, pupils do not use their reading skills well enough to access other areas of the curriculum.

In the Foundation Phase, the majority of pupils develop their writing skills well. By the end of Year 2, most form their letters correctly, use simple punctuation appropriately and spell simple words accurately. However, the more able pupils do not write well enough at length and they have a limited understanding of how to improve their written work.

In key stage 2, the majority of pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills so that by Year 6 work is well presented, with good standards achieved in handwriting and spelling. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of tenses and the conventions of grammar. They write with increasing fluency and accuracy, organising and presenting their writing in different ways. However, they make limited use of drafting in order to improve their work and do not make sufficient use of their skills to complete extended or imaginative pieces of written work.

In mathematics, pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills but the ability of many pupils, particularly the more able, to solve problems and undertake investigative work is not developed enough. They make very limited use of their numeracy skills to support their work in other areas of learning.

Pupils identified with additional learning needs achieve well against the targets in their individual education plans. Boys and girls achieve equally well relative to their starting points.

Across the school nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills in Welsh. Most pupils can follow a range of instructions and respond appropriately to questions. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils speak confidently to convey personal information and achieve good standards when writing in Welsh. Older pupils read confidently in Welsh with good pronunciation and understanding.

The small cohorts in some year groups have a significant impact on the data. Results at both key stages have varied over the past four years. Key stage 1 results have been below the family of schools average for three of the last four years. At level 2 and above, results in science have been slightly below the performance in English and mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in English have been slightly below the results in mathematics and science.

At the end of key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 and above compares favourably with that of the family in all subjects. The number of pupils achieving the higher than expected level 5 is better in mathematics and science than it is in English. When the separate attainment targets for English are compared with the family group average, key stage 1 results at level 2 and above have nearly always been below and key stage 2 results at level 4 and above have nearly always been above.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils feel safe and happy in school. Pupils clearly enjoy school and have a very positive attitude to learning. Behaviour is almost always good and at times exemplary. All pupils show courtesy and respect to each other, staff and visitors.

As pupils move through the school, they develop good social and life skills. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own actions and older pupils are very supportive of the younger pupils. All pupils are actively involved in playing a part in the school community.

Pupils' decision-making skills are developed appropriately. Members of the school council, for instance, decide how to spend money raised as a result of their fundraising efforts. Pupils agree class rules and have an input into what they want to learn. Pupils feel part of the local community through their links with the church and their involvement with other activities in the village. They are well prepared for life and work outside school.

All pupils are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They have a positive attitude towards eating healthily and taking exercise.

Attendance over the past three years has remained at about 94%. This is close to the average level when compared to that of similar schools. Most pupils arrive punctually at the start of the school day.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school provides a range of learning experiences that meet the needs of the majority of pupils. Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, although in some classes learning experiences are not interesting enough and do not challenge pupils to achieve high standards

Teachers' planning is detailed and covers all aspects of the curriculum, but there is a lack of consistency or whole school approach. Specific reference to planning for groups of pupils is underdeveloped and this impedes the progress pupils make, especially the more able. The school is in the early stages of adapting the curriculum to cater for classes where Foundation Phase and key stage 2 pupils work together.

Pupils' experiences are enriched through a good combination of work on and off site including various visits, clubs, special events and extra-curricular activities.

Planning for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum is generally good. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy or extended writing skills across the curriculum.

The school plans provision for the Welsh dimension well. The Welsh language is promoted creatively through topic work. As a result, pupils have a good bank of relevant vocabulary and are able to make links to other areas of the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality and the history and culture of Wales through educational visits.

Provision for education for sustainable development is strong but provision for global citizenship is not as well developed.

Teaching: Adequate

The quality of teaching throughout the school is too variable. However, there are examples of effective work, particularly towards the end of key stage 2. All teachers have good subject knowledge and establish good working relationships with pupils.

Where teaching is good, teachers share lesson objectives and success criteria with pupils at the start of a lesson. They use an effective range of teaching methods to interest pupils, have high expectations of them and cater for the needs of all groups of pupils. However, these strategies are not applied consistently in all classes. Within too many lessons there is a lack of challenge and insufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This impedes the pace of learning and the progress pupils make, particularly the more able.

Teachers and support staff work well together in all classes. Teaching assistants support individuals and groups of pupils. Their work is planned effectively and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

The school's assessment procedures are adequate. Teachers keep clear and systematic records of pupils' progress, although these records are not used effectively enough to plan for future learning. Suitable oral feedback is given within

lessons to help pupils progress. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their work. Assessment for learning strategies are being used in a majority of classes, but their impact is variable across the school. Target setting for individual pupils is in its early stages of development. Although most pupils are aware of their literacy targets they are not sure of how to achieve them.

Reports to parents are clear and informative. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance for its pupils. Pupils and parents value the school's safe and caring environment. There are good arrangements in place to support pupils' wellbeing and healthy lifestyles. Pupils learn how to keep safe and there are effective strategies to encourage good behaviour.

Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. The school encourages the pupils to work well with each other and to show respect, care and concern for others. The school's liaison arrangements with a range of external and support services are good and provide access to information and guidance for pupils and parents.

The caring ethos of the school ensures that pupils with additional needs are identified early. Good use is made of support from a wide range of outside specialist agencies, such as the educational psychology service, to identify and meet pupils' needs. All teaching and support staff play an active role in supporting these pupils. Their needs are met through a good range of programmes. Tracking procedures are used well to target additional support and to monitor its effect. Individual education plans are of good quality and are reviewed regularly. The school keeps parents fully informed and encourages their involvement.

The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding but a very few procedures for dealing with safeguarding are not fully developed.

Learning environment: Good

The school has established a caring, welcoming and orderly environment where every child is valued. The school is fully inclusive and treats all pupils equally. There is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. All pupils have the opportunity to access the full range of the school's provision. There are effective procedures in place to deal with any incidents of bullying.

There is a good supply of resources that are well matched to pupils' needs. The school has recently invested in new reading resources and these are having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to reading.

The accommodation is sufficient and well maintained but has shortcomings because of the lack of a school hall. This impacts on the opportunities for older pupils to have regular lessons in physical education. The outdoor learning environment provides good opportunities to enhance pupils' learning, particularly in the Foundation Phase.

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

Leadership: Adequate

The acting headteacher provides positive leadership and has a good understanding of the school's needs. She is well supported by all staff and governors. Pupils and staff are valued for their contributions to school life. The school currently has no senior leadership team but all teaching staff have specific responsibilities to develop the school as a learning community. Their work impacts well on the ethos of the school. Staff meetings are well organised and focus appropriately on priorities in the school improvement plan.

The school has procedures to manage the performance of teaching staff. However, there is no rigorous system in place to monitor teaching and learning and no formal system to appraise the performance of support staff. The use of data to monitor performance and to improve outcomes for pupils is not currently well developed.

Governors carry out their role effectively. They are well informed about developments in the school. The work of the governing body is well organised and purposeful. Governors have developed a good understanding of the data available to schools and use this well to challenge the school to do better.

The school takes appropriate account of national and local priorities. The school implements the requirements of the Foundation Phase fully. Priorities in the school improvement plan focus well on raising pupils' standards in basic skills. Work on developing the use of the Welsh language has had a significant impact on standards. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing pupils' healthy lifestyles. However, there is a very limited awareness of the School Effectiveness Framework or its implications.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has recently established more systematic procedures for self-evaluation. In compiling the current self-evaluation report good account has been taken of the views of all staff and governors. Pupils play an active role in identifying areas for improvement through the school and eco councils. The views of parents have only been sought through informal discussion.

The school's self-evaluation report is detailed and contains a thorough analysis of performance data. The report recognises a considerable number of strengths in all aspects of the school's work and identifies some areas where improvements are needed. Insufficient use is made of the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that all areas for development are identified.

The outcomes of self-evaluation have not been used to inform priorities in the current school improvement plan. However, the plan is focused appropriately on raising standards in key areas and contains specific actions and timescales. Progress in addressing the targets for improvement is monitored and actions taken have led to measureable improvements by, for example, raising standards in reading. Work on other areas for development, including raising standards in writing, mathematics and developing skills provision, has not yet had a significant impact.

Staff regularly attend courses to update their knowledge and skills. Information from courses attended is shared with other adults in the school and in a few instances this has a positive impact on outcomes for pupils. However, a lack of consistency in developing innovative approaches to teaching and learning across the school limits the impact of these initiatives. Work with staff in other schools is at an early stage of development.

Progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection has been too variable.

Partnership working: Good

The school has effective links with a range of partnerships that make a positive contribution to improving outcomes for pupils. The partnership with parents is good. Parents feel welcome in school and are kept well informed, particularly through the school website. The information sent home with pupils enables parents to support their child's learning well. Pupils benefit from the school's well-established links with the community.

The school generally responds well to advice and guidance from the local authority and acts upon recommendations made. Actions taken as a result of involvement with the local authority have impacted positively on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Detailed transition plans and joint activities support pupils' smooth transition to secondary school. Partnership with the local secondary school and the cluster of primary schools has been used effectively to ensure consistency of teachers' assessments in the core subjects. However, the school does not take advantage of opportunities to share resources with other schools.

Resource management: Adequate

All teachers have appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum. Arrangements for part-time teaching make the best use of each teacher's expertise and experience. Arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time are effective. Many staff have numerous roles in the school but all are deployed well and their time is used effectively.

Good organisation is used to ensure that the existing buildings are used to their full potential. Good planning is in place to compensate for the lack of a school hall although in bad weather this sometimes impacts on the opportunities for older pupils to have regular lessons in physical education. The use of learning resources is well organised to ensure maximum benefit to pupils.

Overall, financial resources are managed well and deployed effectively to meet priorities in the school improvement plan. The headteacher and the finance committee of the governing body review spending regularly. Financial responsibilities are clearly defined and well balanced. Although good use is made of funding, overall the outcomes for pupils are adequate; therefore the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Care is required when responding to the school performance data at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Because the cohorts of pupils are sometimes small, it is difficult to reach a meaningful judgement based on the results. The number of pupils assessed at the end of both key stages varied between four and twelve.

Key stage 1

Over the past four years, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in the core subject indicator (CSI) has been variable. Pupils' performance at the expected level (level 2) has been below the family of schools' average for three of the past four years. When compared to the relative performance of schools with similar percentages of free school meals, results were in the lowest 25% for this period.

Pupils' attainment in English has generally followed the same pattern as the CSI, except for 2011 when results in English were higher. For oracy and writing, the performance has nearly always been below the family average. Results in reading rose to above the family average in 2011.

At level 2 and above, results in science have been slightly below the performance in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment, in mathematics and science, has been below the family average for three of the last four years.

In English and mathematics, no pupils achieved the higher level 3 in two of the last four years. No pupil achieved level 3 in science in 2011, although from 2008 to 2010 results in science at the higher level showed an upward trend.

Key stage 2

Over time, results at the expected level (level 4) have also varied. Pupils' performance in the CSI has been well above the family average for three of the last four years. Results in mathematics and science have been below the family average for only one of the past four years, with English results consistently above. When compared to the relative performance of schools with similar percentages of free school meals, results placed the school in the lowest 25% in 2010 and the highest 25% in 2011.

Results for oracy and reading at level 4 have followed a similar pattern to results for English, while pupils' attainment in writing has risen steadily over the last three years.

Although pupils' results at the higher level 5 in English rose steadily from 2008 to 2010, they fell in 2011 and have been below the family average for the last four years. In mathematics and science, at level 5, results have risen in the last three years and in 2011 were significantly higher than the family average.

There is no clear pattern of difference in performance between boys and girls in either key stage 1 or key stage 2.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Response to the learner questionnaires

Thirty-six pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire.

All pupils say they feel safe in school. They agree that the school teaches them to be healthy and there are lots of chances to get regular exercise. All pupils know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard.

Nearly all pupils feel they are doing well at school. They agree that teachers and other adults in school help them to learn and make progress. They believe they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. Nearly all pupils state that homework helps them to understand and improve their work in school.

Most pupils feel that pupils behave well at play and lunch time but a few think that other pupils' behaviour interferes with their work in class. A few pupils do not feel the school deals well with bullying and are unsure about who to talk to if they are worried or upset.

Pupils' responses to the questions on how well the school deals with bullying and whether pupils know who to talk to if they are worried or upset are slightly less positive than the views of pupils in other schools across Wales.

Response to the parent questionnaires

Twenty-five parents completed the questionnaire.

All parents agree that their child was helped to settle in well when they started school and that their child likes school. They think that their child is safe in school and feel that pupils behave well.

Nearly all parents believe that their child is making good progress. They think that staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. They say that staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect. Nearly all parents feel that the school helps pupils to become more mature and to take responsibility. They understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Most parents are satisfied with the school and think that teaching is good. They say that the school provides a good range of activities for pupils and encourages them to be healthy and to take regular exercise. Most parents feel that pupils receive appropriate support in relation to their individual needs. They agree that they are kept well informed about their child's progress. Most parents believe the school is well run and state that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.

Many parents feel that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school. They agree that homework builds well on what their child learns in school.

Overall, parents in St. George Controlled Primary School are slightly less positive in their responses about the school than parents in other schools across Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Jane Williams	Reporting Inspector
Lowri Haf Evans	Team Inspector
Susan Owen	Lay Inspector
Andrew Jones	Peer Inspector
Eleri Tristram (Acting Headteacher)	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. FYear 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.