



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

**Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl
Allt Yr Efail
Llandegla
Wrexham
Denbighshire
LL11 3AW**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

Mr Goronwy Morris

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

Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl is situated on two sites in the villages of Bryneglwys and Llandegla six miles apart, in Denbighshire. The school is under the voluntary control of the Church in Wales. The prospectus describes it as a fully bilingual school offering children the opportunity to study through either Welsh or English. Provision for Foundation Phase pupils is mainly on the Bryneglwys site and key stage 2 pupils are taught at the Llandegla site.

The school is in a relatively prosperous area. Children are admitted on a part-time basis in the term following their third birthday and on a full-time basis in September following their fourth birthday. English is the home language of most pupils. About 20% speak Welsh at home.

There are currently 50 pupils on roll, including 11 nursery age pupils. Pupil numbers have been relatively consistent over the past four years. .

Currently, around 2% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well below local and national averages. Eleven pupils (22%) are identified as having additional learning needs. No pupils have a statement of special educational need.

At the time of the inspection the school was being led by a temporary acting headteacher who had been at the school since September 2011. A permanent headteacher has been appointed for the beginning of the summer term. Pupils are taught by four full-time teachers and one teacher who works part-time at the school. Both teachers in key stage 2 are on temporary contracts and new to the school since January 2012.

The individual school budget for Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £7,484 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Denbighshire is £9,248 and the minimum is £2719. Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl is fourth out of 52 primary schools in Denbighshire 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 school's overall performance is adequate because:

- although many pupils attain the expected level in both key stages, outcomes for more able pupils are not as good as they could be;
- whilst many Foundation Phase pupils make good progress in their Welsh language skill; pupils in key stage 2 do not make the necessary progress;
- whilst many pupils, particularly in the Foundation Phase write with increasing confidence for a wide range of purposes, opportunities for older pupils to develop their independent and extended writing skills are underdeveloped;
- the quality of teaching across the school is good;
- the quality of care, support and guidance leads to good standards of pupils' wellbeing;
- the caring ethos which is very evident and reflected in all the school's activities;
- all members of staff are committed to providing pupils with the best opportunities for learning; and
- the school is now successfully engaging with parents and the community.

Prospects for improvement

The school has adequate prospects for improvement because:

- the school has gone through a very difficult period recently. During this time there have been numerous changes in leadership and teaching staff in key stage 2.
- the current acting headteacher has brought about stability and a sense of direction and purpose which has been shared successfully with all members of staff, governors, parents and pupils;
- the governing body, ably led by the new chair, is now clear of its roles and responsibilities;
- priorities in the school improvement plan and the associated actions focus clearly on improving standards; and
- recent improvements have not as yet had a sustained impact on improving end of key stage outcomes.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 ensure that more pupils in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2 achieve at the higher level;
- R2 improve pupils' extended writing skills across the curriculum in key stage 2;
- R3 raise standards in Welsh in key stage 2;
- R4 ensure that pupils in key stage 2 have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve their work; and
- R5 build on the recent improvement in strategic leadership and management.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Many pupils enter the school with above average skills in literacy and numeracy and most have good social skills. By the age of seven, most pupils have made good progress in English, mathematics and science. However, not enough pupils achieve the higher level 3 in these subjects, taking into account their good starting points.

By the age of 11, many pupils reach the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Outcomes for more able pupils are not as good as they could be.

In lessons and in discussion, many pupils recall their previous learning well and show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in most subjects. They apply their skills well to new situations, showing increasing confidence as they progress through the school. In both key stages, those with additional needs achieve well. They make good progress in relation to their ability, interest and previous attainment. Although girls generally outperform boys in key stage 2, particularly in English at the higher level, the difference is similar to that within the family of schools.

Throughout the school nearly all pupils listen well and speak clearly with increasing confidence. Many older pupils express themselves maturely. Most pupils enjoy reading and do so with appropriate fluency and accuracy. Many use appropriate expression when reading aloud and they understand the subject matter well. Most pupils in the Foundation Phase enjoy reading and use a wide range of effective strategies that enable them to read with appropriate fluency and understanding. By the end of Year 2 they have a sound knowledge of letter sounds and patterns. In key stage 2, many pupils read a wide range of texts with good expression. The more able talk readily about books and authors they like or dislike and have an appropriate understanding of characters and storyline. More able pupils can quickly skim a passage to gain its meaning. Many apply their reading skills well in different subjects. However, few pupils confidently infer information from a text or are able to independently locate and use reference books effectively to gather information.

Pupils' writing skills are good overall. Nearly all pupils in the Foundation Phase write with increasing confidence for a wide range of purposes. Many write in sentences, using a good range of punctuation correctly. They develop good phonic awareness and make sensible attempts at spelling familiar words. By the end of key stage 2 many pupils use appropriate vocabulary to write in a range of forms. Generally their writing is structured effectively. However, few pupils consistently demonstrate more advanced extended writing skills. Generally, the presentation and handwriting skills of many pupils in key stage 2 are weak.

Overall standards in Welsh are adequate. Many Foundation Phase pupils respond appropriately to instructions by staff and use their Welsh language skills with increasing confidence. They read simple texts with understanding and write short pieces using familiar patterns. In key stage 2, whilst many pupils respond readily and enthusiastically to their teachers they lack the confidence to initiate discussion in Welsh. Their reading skills are at a basic level and their writing skills are limited.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and the importance of an active lifestyle. Nearly all enjoy school life, feel safe and are proud of their school.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are engaged and attentive in class. They work successfully in pairs and groups, showing respect for the views of others as they share ideas. They are keen to support each other.

All pupils in the Foundation Phase are effectively involved in planning their learning activities and are successfully involved in agreeing their own targets for improvement. In key stage 2, however, pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve is not as well developed.

Nearly all pupils are courteous and well behaved. School attendance at 96% is exceptional and is consistently in the highest 25% when compared to that of similar schools.

The school council is a successful forum and pupils express their opinions well. Members feel that their views are valued and their suggestions and decisions make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

Many pupils gain good levels of knowledge, experience and confidence from their involvement with the community. The way in which pupils at the school develop as rounded and confident individuals is a strong feature.

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

The school provides a good range of learning experiences, both within and out of school which engage most pupils' interests well. All pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase, national curriculum and religious education.

Planning in the Foundation Phase is very detailed and thorough and successfully engages the full range of pupils. In key stage 2, whilst learning experiences are often adapted well to meet the needs of specific groups, they do not always challenge the more able pupils sufficiently. Planning for the development of pupils' communication, numeracy and key skills have been revised recently and now provides for better continuity and development in pupils' experiences across the curriculum. Planning for the development of pupils' extended writing skills across the curriculum in key stage 2 is not wholly effective.

Provision for the Welsh language does not successfully meet the needs of all pupils. Provision in the Foundation Phase develops most pupils Welsh language skills effectively. However, although all teachers in key stage 2 use Welsh regularly during the school day, learning experiences do not successfully build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of the language. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is promoted well.

The school succeeds in promoting education for sustainable development and global citizenship through activities such as recycling, care for the local environment and their studies of different cultures.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching across the school is good. Very good relationships in all classes promote effective learning. Support staff are used well to support individuals and groups of pupils.

All teachers plan their lessons well with clear objectives. Generally, lessons are well matched to meet the needs of most pupils. However, tasks are not always challenging enough to meet the needs of the more able pupils particularly at key stage 2. All teachers use a range of resources effectively to support, motivate and challenge pupils. Teachers in the Foundation Phase provide good opportunities to develop pupils' independent skills. This aspect is not as well developed in key stage 2.

There is an efficient system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in all areas of learning and subjects at individual and group level. This is particularly thorough in the Foundation Phase.

Teachers know their pupils well and give good oral feedback while they are working. In the best examples the marking in books is effective and comments are useful in helping pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

The reports to parents are detailed and show clearly how well pupils are doing. Parents appreciate the opportunity to discuss their children's work with members of staff.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Pupils' health and wellbeing is given a high priority. Arrangements to encourage their involvement in their school and the wider community are now a particularly strong feature of the school.

The provision for personal and social education is good, and the school promotes pupils' moral and cultural development effectively. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is a very strong feature of the school.

The school is pro-active in seeking support from a range of other key agencies to meet the needs of specific pupils.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Provision and support for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Their needs are identified at an early stage and their progress carefully monitored. Individual education plans are detailed and informative with clear targets for improvement. Effective support, including catch-up programmes is provided for groups of pupils when necessary.

Learning environment: Good

The school provides a safe, secure and inclusive environment for all pupils. A caring ethos is very evident and reflected in all the school's activities. There is a clear

emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. Despite the age of the accommodation, the school provides at both sites a stimulating learning environment with creative and colourful displays of pupils' work. Both sites are well maintained. The internal and external learning environment for pupils in the Foundation Phase is of a very high standard. The school has a good supply of resources which are used well to support learning. Good use is made of the community to enhance the provision.

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

Leadership: Adequate

The school has gone through a very difficult period with as many as three head teachers in a relatively short time. The leadership of the temporary acting head has brought about stability and a sense of direction and purpose. He ensures that all staff and pupils are valued and respected. Job descriptions are now clear and recent changes in management practice is giving all members of staff the belief that they are making a valuable contribution in shaping the future direction of the school.

There is a detailed analysis of school performance data at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, which correctly identifies the importance of improving outcomes in the core areas of communication, numeracy and science. Raising standards is now the focus for school improvement. However, actions have yet to be fully realised in terms of pupil outcomes.

Many of the governors are new and are very supportive of the acting head teacher. They are very ably led by the new chair and are now clear of their roles and responsibilities. They receive regular reports from the head teacher which are carefully discussed. They are well aware of pupils' performance at the age of seven and eleven and the school's priorities for the future. There are suitable committees and structures in place to oversee financial management, review policies and school procedures and to ensure that statutory requirements are met. However, they are relatively recent and as yet have not had sufficient time to become embedded.

Appropriate steps have now been taken to meet national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase has been very successfully implemented. Planning for the skills-based curriculum at key stage 2 is now in place and is beginning to have a positive impact developing pupils' ability to use their skills in a number of subjects.

Improving quality: Adequate

School self evaluation and development planning is now seen as an important aspect of good management practice. Current self-evaluation procedures are developing well but there is little evidence that this has been a regular feature of the school's practice in the past. The link between self evaluation and priorities in the school improvement plan is clear. The report draws on a range of first-hand evidence that includes carefully analysis of data, scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils. There is now a more systematic approach to monitoring but judgements do not focus

sufficiently on the actions taken and their impact on standards pupils achieve. Pupils', governors' and parents' views are now considered carefully.

The school improvement plan is a useful document that focuses clearly on raising attainment in the core subjects. It has been carefully costed and includes realistic timescales and success criteria to help measure its effectiveness. The impact of the actions is yet to be realised.

Members of staff have good opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills; there is good evidence of this particularly in the Foundation Phase where improved working practice is having a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

Partnership working: Good

The school works closely with parents; they feel welcomed and involved in their children's education. There are strong links with the two communities which the school serves and good use is made of opportunities to enhance pupils' learning experiences through the use of the local environment.

Links with the local church are valuable and contribute successfully in developing pupils' spiritual and moral education.

The school has good links with the local pre-school settings and this prepares the pupils well for when they start school. Transfer arrangements agreed with the local secondary school enable older pupils to be well prepared for the next stage in their learning. The moderation of pupils' work within the cluster of local schools provides an appropriate tool for teachers to assess pupils' work more effectively at the end of key stage 2.

The partnership with the local authority has enabled the school to access the support of experienced leaders to improve provision and provide stability and direction.

Resource management: Adequate

The school has sufficient qualified teachers and support staff at both sites and they are deployed effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and good use is made of support staff. Teachers make effective use of their planning, preparation and assessment time.

There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning particularly in the Foundation Phase.

Although the buildings on both sites are old, they provide suitable accommodation. The management of pupils between the two sites is effective.

The headteacher and the governing body manage the school's budget well and keep spending under constant review. Responsibilities for budget management are clear and overall spending decisions relate well to priorities for improvement.

Despite the good features in current resource management, the school provides adequate value for money because the impact of recent actions to improve standards has not fully been realised in terms of pupil outcomes.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Due to the small number of pupils at the end of both key stages, the results of pupil assessments have to be treated with care. One pupil's results can have a significant impact on the school's performance.

KS1

In the assessments at the end of key stage 1, the percentage of pupils who achieve the expected level (level 2) in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination has been higher than the figures for Wales and the family of similar schools in four of the last five years. This is also true for these subjects individually, in addition to reading and writing in English.

When benchmarked against schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school is amongst the top 25% in Wales at this level in four of the past five years.

No pupils have attained beyond the expected level in any subject during the last four years.

KS2

In key stage 2 in 2011, all pupils achieved the expected level (level 4) in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination. Performance in previous years has been variable. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level has been higher than the figures for Wales and the family of similar schools in two of the previous four years and below in the other two years. Apart from 2009/10, the percentage achieving the expected level in reading and writing has been in line with the figures for Wales and the family of schools.

In 2011, when benchmarked against schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals the school is amongst the top 25%. However, performance is in the lower 50% in three of the previous four years and in the bottom 25% in two of them.

In 2011, the percentage of pupils attaining beyond the expected level in English and mathematics compared favourably with those of the family of schools. However, the percentage of pupils who attained level 5 or higher has been lower than the figures for Wales and the family of schools in previous years. No pupils attained at the higher level in mathematics and science in three of the previous four years. No pupil has attained the higher level in Welsh over the past five years.

When benchmarked against schools that have a similar percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the school is amongst the bottom 25% in Wales at this level in three of the past five years

In key stage 1, there is no consistent pattern of boys' underachievement in comparison with girls'. In key stage 2, although girls generally outperform boys particularly in English at the higher level, the difference is similar to that within the family of schools.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Pupil questionnaires

Thirty key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire. Nearly all feel safe in school, and say that the school deals well with any bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried or upset. Most believe that the school teaches them how to be healthy and provides plenty of chances for regular exercise.

Almost all those asked feel they are doing well in the school and that staff help them make progress and support them if they find their work hard. Many agree that they have plenty of books and resources and that homework helps them improve.

A few have concerns about others' behaviour at break times or in class.

Parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Goronwy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Mervyn Lloyd Jones	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Llinos Mary Jones	Peer Inspector
Colin Roberts	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.