



*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**

**Gwernymynydd County Primary School  
Godre'r Coed  
Gwernymynydd  
Mold  
CH7 4DT**

**Date of inspection: June 2011**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	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

Gwernymynydd County Primary School is a community school for boys and girls aged three to eleven years. The school is situated in the small village of Gwernymynydd, three miles south-west of Mold, Flintshire. All of the 60 children who attend the school come from English speaking homes.

The school's catchment area is not economically or socially disadvantaged. Around 13% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This figure is lower than local and national averages. No pupils have English as an additional language. The school has identified 9% of pupils as having special educational needs, which is much lower than the national average.

In 2010, the school was one of the first in Wales to gain the new All Wales Standard for the provision of Basic Skills. Other school awards include Phase 3 of the Healthy Schools programme and the Eco School silver award.

The last school inspection was in June 2005. The headteacher has been in post since 1997.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Gwernymynydd County Primary School is £3,659, which compares with a maximum of £7,635 and a minimum of £2,660 for primary schools in Flintshire. The school has the 13th highest budget per pupil out of the 74 primary schools in Flintshire.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The school's current performance is good because:

- most pupils attain highly in English, mathematics and science compared to the performance of other similar schools;
- pupils' attitudes to learning are good and the behaviour of pupils is very good; and
- the strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils gain good literacy and numeracy skills is very successful.

### Prospects for improvement

While there are strengths in areas of leadership, such as partnership working and financial management, the school's prospects for improvement are adequate. This is because of limited strategic leadership and lack of accuracy in evaluating all areas of the school's performance.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further, Gwernymynydd County Primary School needs to:

- R1 improve curriculum planning across the school and the organisation of teaching groups in the Foundation Phase to meet pupils' developmental needs;
- R2 improve planning for skills in work across the school;
- R3 develop assessment procedures further, particularly the quality of marking and pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress;
- R4 improve the leadership and management roles of staff and governors;
- R5 extend self-evaluation procedures; and
- R6 ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with skills above or similar to those normally expected for pupils of their age and above the local authority average.

Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well in work across the curriculum. Pupils with additional learning needs and those in receipt of free school meals achieve well in relation to their abilities, especially in English and mathematics. However, in key stage 2 in the non-core subjects, older pupils do not always achieve as highly as they could because the work is not challenging enough.

Pupils listen attentively in lessons. Most speak clearly using a range of vocabulary, which they often use well to communicate their ideas and opinions. Overall, pupils use their reading and writing skills well in work across the curriculum. Many pupils read accurately and fluently and become competent in searching for information. Across the school, pupils usually write well in different forms and for different purposes. However, in key stage 2, there are often inaccuracies in pupils' spelling, punctuation and use of grammar. The presentation of a minority of pupils' work is untidy.

In both key stages and over several years, the school has performed particularly well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in comparison with the family and other similar schools. Pupils' end of key stage performance is also above local and national averages.

Over the past five years, there have been particularly small numbers of pupils in key stage 1; as a result, attainment data should be treated cautiously. Nevertheless, the trend in performance for the expected level for pupils of seven years of age is good. Performance at the higher level (level 3) at the end of key stage 1 is above the family and national averages in all core subjects. There is no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls.

There are also small numbers of pupils in key stage 2. The trend in performance for the expected level for pupils of eleven years of age continues to be good. Performance at the higher level (level 5) at the end of key stage 2 is either above or similar to the family and national averages in all core subjects. There is no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Most pupils make good progress in gaining oral skills in the Welsh language. Pupils' reading and writing skills in Welsh are improving but are at an early stage of development.

## **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils are well motivated, enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They engage readily in their work and show good levels of concentration. Pupils feel safe in school. They understand the need to eat healthily and take exercise. Behaviour is very good. Nearly all pupils are courteous and polite and they show respect for each other, which contributes to the caring school ethos. Pupils co-operate well and take responsibility for their actions. The level of most pupils' attendance is good and they arrive on time for school.

Pupils are involved well in a range of community activities. The school council is well established and pupil councillors make a positive contribution to school life. However, across the school, pupils' decision-making responsibilities are limited. While pupils' problem-solving skills and skills in improving their own learning are developing, these are not fully influential in their learning.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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## **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The school's curriculum has a very strong emphasis on English and mathematics, which has a beneficial effect on the standards achieved by pupils. Teachers' planning for these subjects is comprehensive and detailed.

However, in the Foundation Phase, the provision for all of the areas of learning is not well balanced and focuses on the age rather than the stage of pupils' development. There is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' independence and decision-making skills and no planning for the use of the outdoor learning environment. In key stage 2, the planning of work in the foundation subjects does not match pupils' learning needs closely enough, particularly the needs of older and more able pupils. Throughout the school, there is not enough progression in the planning for communication, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

A good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits enhances pupils' learning. The good provision for sustainability and global citizenship helps pupils to understand the role they and others play in society as well as to know more about the wider world. The provision for pupils to develop an understanding of Welsh heritage, language and culture and is developing well. Overall, there is good provision for pupils to increase their understanding of different cultures and faiths.

## **Teaching: Adequate**

There are good relationships between staff and pupils and this enhances the learning. The teaching of English, mathematics and science throughout the school is consistently good, which has resulted in pupils' high standards in these subjects.

In the majority of lessons where teaching is effective, staff:

- provide a good language model for pupils;
- emphasise clear learning objectives and learning outcomes;
- give precise explanations and instructions; and
- plan activities that are well matched to the learning needs of less able pupils.

In a significant minority of lessons where teaching is less effective:

- planning does not fully meet the needs of all pupils in the non-core subjects and areas of learning;
- expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work in key stage 2 are not consistent or high enough;
- there is not enough progression in the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum; and
- staff do not promote pupils' ability to make choices and work independently.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed a system for tracking pupils' progress. This system has contributed to good standards in the core subjects. Teacher assessment of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science is accurate. Moderation arrangements with the cluster of schools have supported this work well. While teachers usually mark pupils' work regularly, in key stage 2 in the non-core subjects teachers provide few comments that offer advice on what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Parents are well informed about their children's achievements and wellbeing through the termly reporting system.

### **Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory**

The school has effective arrangements for promoting good behaviour and anti-bullying. There are suitable arrangements with specialist services and outside agencies to support and provide guidance to pupils and parents.

Overall, the provision for healthy living and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school promotes values and principles very well and this is reflected in the respect pupils have for each other and adults. Curriculum studies, including the Curriculum Cymreig and educational visits, contribute well to pupils' cultural and wider development.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good, particularly the work to improve pupils' literacy skills. Teachers diagnose difficulties at an early stage. A good range of intervention and support approaches are very successful in helping these pupils make progress and achieve good standards.

Despite these good features, there are weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements. The school does not have an appropriate policy for safeguarding. Procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues are underdeveloped.

## **Learning environment: Adequate**

The school is welcoming to pupils, parents and visitors. It has a caring ethos where pupils are valued and receive equal access to all areas of the school's provision. Work such as topic studies and assemblies promote equality and respect for diversity well.

There is a suitable range of learning resources, including ICT, which staff and pupils use well.

The school building is well maintained and provides a clean, pleasant learning environment. The headteacher and secretary share an extremely small office, which is inadequate as a working area and lacks space for organising and storing school documentation, including confidential information.

There is plenty of space for outdoor play and learning. Areas such as the vegetable garden and the secure play area for children in the Foundation Phase provide opportunities for learning. However, the outdoor provision for pupils in the Foundation Phase is not used enough to support their learning and independence.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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## **Leadership: Adequate**

The headteacher, staff and governors are keenly committed to ensuring that pupils gain good standards in English and mathematics as well as promoting their wellbeing. They are successful in these objectives. However, there has not been enough attention to other important areas of the school's work.

The headteacher has a significant daily teaching commitment and is very heavily involved in supporting pupils with additional learning needs. He has been influential in developing the good caring ethos and emphasis on developing good standards in English and mathematics throughout the school. However, an over-commitment to teaching has limited the time available for the management of the school, which has had an effect on the quality of policies and documentation. The school's focus is on too narrow a range of initiatives. There is a lack of response to recent developments in education, including approaches to learning and teaching and the implementation of the Foundation Phase. Although other staff have a range of responsibilities, there is not enough devolvement of roles to share management responsibilities.

The governing body is supportive of the school's work, but it does not yet fulfil its role as the school's critical friend well enough.

While the school has been successful in meeting national and local priorities to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, staff have not addressed other priorities well enough. For example, the Foundation Phase and work to develop skills across the curriculum are underdeveloped. The school has not taken enough account of the School Effectiveness Framework.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school seeks the views of pupils and parents and carers regularly and responds well to their comments. There is a programme of subject reviews led by staff and local authority advisors, governors and the headteacher are involved in monitoring teaching. Leaders effectively analyse the school's performance data. Despite these good features, a comprehensive system for self-evaluation is not well established and processes often lack rigour. Leaders do not consider a wide range of first-hand evidence and, as a result, self-evaluation is not accurate enough. The school has not identified some important areas for development, such as the improvements needed in the Foundation Phase and to the curriculum in key stage 2.

While the school has plans to improve areas, including the development of pupils' thinking skills, other important school priorities identified by this inspection are not included. The school has addressed the majority of the recommendations of the last inspection report but the planning and delivery of skills, the marking of pupils' work and the match of work to pupils' learning needs remain shortcomings.

There is an effective culture of collaboration and team work between staff. The school is involved in several networks of professional practice, such as the small schools network to develop planning for the Foundation Phase. However, the development of professional learning communities within the school is at an early stage.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school's partnership activities make a good contribution to its life and work and benefit pupils' learning and wellbeing. The school works very well with parents. Parents feel welcome, have opportunities to be involved in the school and value the way that staff respond quickly to their queries and listen to their opinions.

Pupils benefit from the school's good links with the community, such as when they work with members of the community on improving the road that runs through the village. Pupils also benefit from their involvement in local events and from fund-raising work for charities.

There are appropriate links with a range of agencies, such as the educational psychology service. The school's partnership with the local authority has supported work on basic skills and the healthy schools' initiative.

Good induction arrangements help pupils settle quickly in the school. Careful transition planning ensures pupils' smooth transfer to the local secondary school. Partnership with the secondary school and the cluster of primary schools has been very effective in ensuring the consistency of teachers' assessments in the core subjects.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its staff and resources well. There is effective deployment of teachers and support staff across the school. Arrangements for teachers' planning,

preparation and assessment time are appropriate. Overall, the school is well resourced.

The school manages its finances well. Spending decisions match the school's needs and the headteacher and the governing body's finance committee review these regularly.

In view of the good use the school makes of its funding and the good outcomes attained by most pupils, the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

Five parents attended the parents' meeting and eleven parents completed the questionnaires. Overall, parents express a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of education provided by the school. Parents report that staff are very approachable if they have concerns or questions. They feel well informed about their children's achievements through regular meetings with teachers and helpful end-of-year reports. Parents report the higher profile of the Welsh language in the school over the past few years.

Twenty-nine pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Inspectors also talked to individuals and representative groups of pupils across the school. These pupils say that they are happy, enjoy school and know whom they can talk to if they are worried or upset. They feel safe and believe that staff treat them equally and with respect. They believe that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Wendy Young HMI	Reporting Inspector
Sw Roberts HMI	Team Inspector
Elizabeth Mayo AI	Team Inspector
Duncan Hawarth	Lay Inspector
David Griffiths	Peer Inspector
Ken Edgar	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11