



*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**

**Rhosymedre Community Primary School  
Parc Road  
Rhosymedre  
LL14 3EG**

**Date of inspection: March 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

Rhosymedre Community Primary School is located on the edge of a large housing development, south of Wrexham, between Ruabon and Llangollen. In 2007, the infant and junior schools amalgamated. For the year 2010-2011, staff and pupils are using the infant building with limited access to information and communication technology resources. However, a new purpose-built school is scheduled to open in September 2011.

Approximately 50% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is significantly higher than local and national averages. The school describes the area it serves as socially and economically disadvantaged. It is a designated 'Communities First' area.

There are 174 full-time pupils on roll. The classes are taught by eight full-time teachers. They are supported by 17 learning support assistants. There are seven mainstream classes and a Resourced Provision class which caters mainly for pupils with moderate learning difficulties from across the local authority. The school also provides for pupils who have had severe problems coping with life in other local authority schools. There is a high movement of pupils joining or leaving school during the year. There are three pupils who are 'looked after' by the local authority.

The home language of nearly all pupils is English. A small number of pupils have support in their use of English as an additional language. Two pupils speak Welsh fluently. Seven per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Around 45% of pupils are on the special educational needs register, 9% of whom have a statement of special educational needs. This is well above local authority and national percentages.

The junior school was last inspected in 2006 and the infant school inspected in 2005. The headteacher was in post at the last inspection of the junior school. She is due to retire in 2011. There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspections. Only one member of staff from the infant school remains in post. The school has also moved from two separate governing bodies to a joint governing body.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Rhosymedre Community Primary School is £4,328, which compares with a maximum of £9,122 and a minimum of £2,734 for primary schools in Wrexham. The school has the ninth highest budget per pupil out of the 62 primary schools in Wrexham.

## 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 is good because:

- most pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning;
- standards of wellbeing are good throughout the school;
- teaching is consistently effective;
- almost all pupils behave well and are fully engaged in their learning; and
- the headteacher has established a common vision, values and purpose, which have secured improvements in the school.

### Prospects for improvement

The headteacher has successfully managed significant changes to the school over recent years. Staff share her vision and values in raising standards and improving pupils' wellbeing. These strengths outweigh the following areas for improvement:

- there are weaknesses in the leadership of the Foundation Phase; and
- the school improvement plan does not include realistic timescales and clear criteria for evaluation.

## **Recommendations**

The school needs to:

- R1 improve the leadership of the Foundation Phase;
- R2 develop plans for improvement so that they include clear timescales, success criteria and a more focused evaluation of outcomes; and
- R3 develop the role of governors in challenging the work of the school.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor progress in addressing the recommendations and report their findings to Estyn.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Many children enter school with basic skills well below those normally expected for children of their age. From these starting points, most make good progress in their learning. By the end of key stage 2, many read with good expression and accuracy. Most pupils are very attentive and speak with increasing confidence and fluency. They also write well for a range of audiences. Overall, most pupils build well on their previous knowledge. Pupils in Year 6 achieve good standards in using information communication technology (ICT), but the skills of younger pupils are less secure due to limited access to resources.

Pupils in the Resourced Provision have a wide range of special educational needs. Most make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing, numeracy and Welsh, given their abilities, individual learning needs and prior attainment. Their progress in speaking and listening is very good.

The results from teacher assessments at both key stages are influenced by the high percentage of pupils with additional learning needs, those eligible for free school meals and the high number of pupils joining the school during the year.

In key stage 1 in 2010, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (level 2 or above in English, mathematics and science combined) places the school in lower 50% of schools. This position remains unchanged from that of recent years. Since 2007, results have been generally above the average for the family of schools (a group of schools with similar characteristics) and lower than local and national averages.

However, care should be taken when considering these figures because these overall results include those of the Resourced Provision. When these are discounted, results in 2010 at key stage 1 were well above local and national averages in English and mathematics and above in science. Over recent years, results at the higher level 3 in English and mathematics have been consistently above the family of schools average.

In 2010, when compared with similar schools on the basis of free school meals entitlement, pupils' performance in English and mathematics at key stage 2 places the school in the lower 50%, and in the lowest 25% for science. Over recent years, pupils' performance has been below local and national averages, and in the third quarter of schools, but close to the average for the family of schools. When discounting the results of pupils from the Resourced Provision, performance in 2010 is above local and national averages in mathematics and science and just below in English. The combined results for English, mathematics and science were above local and national averages. Since 2007, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science has been above the family of schools average.

Over recent years, girls have generally outperformed boys at both key stages. However, these differences are largely due to the much higher proportion of boys who have special educational needs and who transfer from other schools.

Most pupils make sound progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Younger pupils respond appropriately to basic requests and conversation through short phrases. However, reading skills in Welsh are less well developed. Pupils' awareness of Welsh culture and heritage is good.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils are well cared for within a nurturing learning environment. Most pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living. They have a good awareness of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.

Almost all pupils say that they feel safe in school. They value the care, support and guidance given to them. Behaviour around the school is very good with pupils being courteous, polite and well mannered. The attendance rate of around 93% compares well with that of similar schools. Most pupils arrive punctually.

Most pupils are excited about coming to school and are eager to learn. Their understanding of how well they are doing is developing well. Most know what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are well represented by their school council. Members of the school council are actively involved in making decisions about what happens in the school, for instance in terms of acquiring playground equipment. However, pupils' independent learning skills in the nursery and reception classes and older pupils' entrepreneurial skills are underdeveloped.

Many pupils participate fully in local community events such as the Lantern parade as part of Wrexham's Year of Culture and Wrexham's Healthy Schools Celebration Event.

Standards of wellbeing for pupils in the Resourced Provision are excellent. All pupils participate fully and enjoy learning activities. They are polite and helpful to each other and to staff. Given the emotional challenges many pupils face, the quality of their behaviour in class is excellent.

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

The school provides a wide range of learning experiences, which engage pupils' interests well. It provides very effective programmes to support the needs of individuals and groups, such as those with speech and language or emotional difficulties. Pupils in the Resourced Provision benefit from full access to the National Curriculum, suitably adapted to their individual learning needs. Pupils' learning experiences are enriched by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities including art, choir, swimming and thinking skills.

Most teachers plan clearly for the development of communication, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills. However, teachers do not target sufficiently well the younger pupils to help them improve their skills of writing independently.

Provision for the development of the Welsh language is appropriate. There is a strong and effective focus on promoting pupils' confidence in speaking Welsh, although reading is less well developed. The school promotes well the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of Welsh life.

Global citizenship is developed well through links with other schools and international weeks. The school is less effective in promoting good practice in acting sustainably because of temporary accommodation constraints.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teaching is consistently good through the school, including the Resourced Provision. Most staff use a good range of resources and teaching approaches to ensure that pupils are motivated and engaged. In the few less effective lessons, the work is too easy for some of the pupils and there is not enough opportunity for them to work independently.

Staff have very good relationships with pupils. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This contributes substantially to the good progress that pupils make. The support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in the areas of communication, personal and social skills.

There are effective processes for tracking and maintaining information on pupils' progress. Teachers provide pupils with helpful verbal feedback which ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils' own assessment of their work and that of others is well developed in Year 6 but less so in other mainstream classes. In general, marking is clear and positive. Assessment practices are exemplary in the Resourced Provision, where observations and data are used very effectively to inform planning.

Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's achievements. They receive clear and detailed reports.

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

The school successfully develops pupils' understanding of health and wellbeing. As a result, pupils feel well cared for, safe and secure. Pupils have good opportunities to think about their own beliefs and those of others, through participating in and leading acts of collective worship, for instance on the Hindu festival of Holi.

The school has developed very effective relationships with outside agencies to provide good-quality support for pupils and their parents. For instance, pupils in the Resourced Provision benefit from very good access to specialist support, including physiotherapy, educational psychology and mental health services.



The school has good policies and procedures for promoting pupils' wellbeing. Arrangements for helping pupils to manage their feelings are a particular strength of the school. These arrangements contribute positively to all pupils' emotional, social, moral and cultural development.

Overall, support for pupils with additional learning needs is good. It is excellent within the Resourced Provision. However, in mainstream classes, more able and talented pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. The school acts well on advice given in order to support vulnerable pupils.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The school is highly inclusive, offering equal access to the curriculum for all pupils including those in the Resourced Provision. The promotion, valuing and understanding of the importance of diversity are good throughout the school.

Whilst awaiting transfer to the new school in September 2011, generally staff have been coping well with the shortcomings in the accommodation provided. The Year 1 area is not fit for purpose and leaders have immediate plans to relocate this year group to a more spacious area. Although a few pupils surveyed expressed concern about the lack of resources, overall there are adequate resources to cater for pupils' learning needs. Year 6 pupils have made effective use of laptops for research to compensate for the temporary lack of the computer suite and library. However, teachers do not always make good use of the indoor and outdoor areas to enhance learning opportunities for pupils.

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

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have been successful in developing a shared vision for the school. This is based on high standards of pupils' wellbeing, high expectations for pupils' behaviour and high levels of care, support and guidance. The core values set the strategic direction for the school and have led to improved standards. The vision is fully understood by all members of staff.

The headteacher has successfully managed change, amalgamating the junior and infant schools and managing the move to the infant site while a new school is being built. The appointment of key teaching and support staff has had a significant impact on improving standards in many aspects of school life. However, there are weaknesses in the leadership of the Foundation Phase in terms of joint planning, monitoring of learning and the sharing of good practice.

There is a very strong team spirit within the school. Members of staff feel valued and have specific responsibilities for developing a range of effective initiatives that raise pupils' self-esteem and bring about whole-school improvement. This has a positive impact on the school as a learning community.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations. Under the leadership of a long-serving chairperson, the governors share the headteacher's sense of direction for the school. They support the school conscientiously, although their role in monitoring and challenging the school is not well developed.

The school meets many national and local priorities successfully. For example, it has addressed the principles of the School Effectiveness Framework, especially in the areas of personalising learning and the wellbeing of pupils. The school is highly successful in tackling social disadvantage and pupil engagement in learning. However, the introduction of the Foundation Phase is still at an early stage of development.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school's self-evaluation report is a detailed document that draws on a comprehensive review of standards and provision. A wide range of first-hand evidence has been used well to identify the main strengths and areas that the school needs to develop.

There are effective processes to review all aspects of the school's work over a reasonable period of time. These inform priorities for school development. However, the school improvement plan does not identify clear enough success criteria against which the school can evaluate progress.

Most of the recommendations from the previous inspections have been met. Further action is required to secure more consistent planning for skills across the curriculum and to develop fully the role of the governing body.

Teachers are involved to good effect in a number of networks of professional practice, for instance a thinking skills project and a national literacy forum. They have also worked closely with a member of their family of schools to improve standards.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school works well with a range of partners, especially with those agencies that provide support for pupils with additional learning needs. These partnerships secure good outcomes for pupils' wellbeing and learning, particularly in the Resourced Provision.

Parents and visitors from the community make a positive contribution to enriching pupils' experiences both in school and in the locality. The good partnership with the Flying Start pre-school playgroup ensures that younger children are well prepared for admission to the nursery class.

Transition plans agreed with the Ruabon cluster of schools enable older pupils to prepare appropriately for the next stage of their education. This partnership encourages successful curricular and pastoral links. The cluster of schools has effective procedures for moderating and standardising accurately pupils' work in the National Curriculum core subjects.

The school has good links with parents and carers, who are encouraged to be partners in the life and work of the school.

**Resource management: Good**

The school manages its budget appropriately. The school employs a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff. Staff training needs are met well through regular appraisal and performance management procedures. Teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time effectively.

Finances are efficiently managed. For instance, the school managed the 'Raise attainment and individual standards in education' (RAISE) grant effectively to focus on improving the oracy and literacy skills of pupils. This has had a positive impact on pupils' standards of achievement.

In view of the outcomes achieved by most pupils, the standard of care, support and guidance provided and the appropriate management of the budget, the school provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Eight parents attended the parents' meeting and fourteen parents completed the questionnaires. All expressed very positive views about all aspects of school life. They say that their children are happy and settled, and make good progress. Parents feel well informed about their children's achievements. They all know how to make a complaint and feel that their children receive enough additional support with their individual learning needs. They report that teaching is good and that their children are treated fairly and with respect.

#### **Responses to learner questionnaires**

Eighty-eight pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Inspectors also talked to individuals and representative groups of pupils across the school. Overall, pupils say that they are happy and enjoy school and know to whom they can talk if they are worried or upset. They feel safe and believe that staff treat them equally and with respect. Pupils think that teachers give them good support and provide enough opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles. A minority thought that the behaviour of others interfered with their work and that behaviour at break times was not good. A few pupils thought that they did not have enough resources, including computers, to do their work. Inspection evidence found that these views were influenced by the restrictions of temporary accommodation.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Russell Grigg (AI)	Reporting Inspector
Lynda Newton (AI)	Team Inspector
Peter Duncan	Lay Inspector
Sharon Davies	Peer Inspector
Sue Willan (AI)	Additional Inspector
Rhona Roberts	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