



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

**Churchstoke C.P. School
Churchstoke
Montgomery
Address Powys
SY15 6AA**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

**Mr Peter Mathias
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

Churchstoke Primary School is situated in the village of the same name on the border between England and Wales. There are 74 pupils on roll, including seven of nursery and five of reception age respectively; all attend on a full-time basis. Thirteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below the local and national averages.

Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. On the whole they are neither economically advantaged nor disadvantaged.

Nearly all transfer at the end of their primary education to Bishop's Castle Community College in Shropshire. Nearly all pupils are from white, British backgrounds. None has Welsh as a first language and all but two have English as a first language. Of those with English as an additional language, both are new to the school.

Sixteen per cent of pupils are considered to have some degree of additional learning needs which is below local and national averages. Of these three are identified as receiving additional outside support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. No pupil is 'looked after' by the local authority and no pupil was excluded in the previous school year.

One member of the permanent teaching staff was absent during the inspection due to long-term ill health. Her place was taken by a temporary teacher. There are 3.4 full-time equivalent teachers including the headteacher who has a 0.6 teaching commitment. The school was last inspected in the spring term 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Churchstoke County Primary School in 2011/2012 is £3,541 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Powys is £14,685 and the minimum is £3,005, Churchstoke Primary School is the 61st out of the 101 primary schools in Powys in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school is good because of the :

- good standards in basic skills, particularly in reading;
- good standards achieved by pupils at the end of key stage 2, particularly at level 5;
- good progress and support for all pupils;
- careful planning of the curriculum;
- provision for children in the Foundation Phase; and
- consistently good teaching.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the school self-evaluation report is accurate and reflects the needs of the school;
- there is a very positive ethos where all staff are very committed to school improvement; and
- the governing body is fully involved as a critical friend of the school's leaders .

Recommendations

In order to improve Churchstoke Primary School needs to:

- R1 raise standards in pupils' ability to use Welsh and English together in lessons and in the day-to-day life of the school;
- R2 strengthen links between the school and other schools in the area and further afield, in order to continue to develop teachers' expertise and raise standards further;
- R3 increase opportunities for those teachers with responsibilities to review the quality of teaching and learning in specific subject areas; and
- R4 improve the overall state of repair and appearance of the school and address the issue of school security raised with the governing body.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the school's progress

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: **Good**

All pupils, including those with additional learning needs, have the basic skills required to access the curriculum at their level of development. Across the school the majority display good oral skills. Individual readers in the Foundation Phase read beyond their expected levels and by the end of key stage 2 nearly all are fluent readers and use their reading skills effectively to improve their knowledge and research. Nearly all are confident writers at their respective stages of development and their spelling and presentation skills are good.

Pupils use their numeracy and information and communication technology skills effectively across all areas of the curriculum and in a range of contexts. The majority develop good thinking skills. This has a positive impact on their learning and standards especially in the Foundation Phase and by the end of key stage 2. Because there are only a small number of pupils assessed annually at seven and eleven years of age, the information from the national teacher assessments should be treated with caution.

Over the last five years, the results of seven year olds have been above local and national averages and above most schools in the family of schools across Wales to which this school belongs. However, few reach the higher levels. The results of eleven year olds over this period have been just above local and national averages, with an above average proportion of pupils reaching the higher level. The results have also been just above the family of schools to which this school belongs. Over time boys outperform girls in mathematics and science and girls outperform boys in English.

In 2011 seven year olds performed better than most schools considered to have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, eleven year olds performed below the majority of these schools.

Those with additional learning needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. By the age of eleven nearly all pupils attain at least the expected standards.

Standards in Welsh as a second language are below national averages. The majority of pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in Welsh as a second language however, older pupils do not build on this. Nearly all read simple texts clearly, but oracy and writing skills are weak.

Wellbeing: **Good**

Pupils feel safe in school and learn much about healthy living and personal security. They have positive attitudes to each other and enjoy coming to school.

Attendance in the past three terms was 94.8%. This is better than local and national figures, as is unauthorised absence.

Nearly all pupils behave very well and readily take on responsibilities and react positively to adults.

Community links are good. The school council meets statutory requirements and is involved in organising fundraising and making good suggestions to develop the school.

Pupils regularly visit local businesses, shops and farms. They also learn about the world of work and the community around them through visits to school from business people and members of the emergency services.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers' planning is skills-based and thorough. It is well matched to the different needs of pupils.

Visitors to school, visits to places of interest and a range of extra-curricular activities successfully promote pupils' positive attitudes to learning.

Provision for key skills, including problem-solving and collaborative learning is good. It is thoroughly planned and enriches the experiences of all pupils. There is a very strong focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology skills across all key stages. These skills are successfully incorporated into topics and research projects and are having a positive impact on standards.

In the Foundation Phase incidental Welsh is used regularly during the day and pupils are encouraged to respond appropriately. This is having a positive impact on standards. Incidental Welsh is not used so consistently across key stage 2. There is little encouragement for pupils to respond in Welsh outside lessons.

Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is included in the curriculum, but key stage 2 Welsh ethos across the school is under developed. Welsh culture is, however emphasised in activities such as St David's Day celebrations.

Activities to promote understanding of environmental issues and global citizenship at the school are adequate overall. Sustainability issues are well emphasised and work on global citizenship includes some contact with a school in Kenya. However, pupils' understanding of their place in their own and wider community is limited.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Across the school teachers have a good understanding of how to organise and teach pupils of different age groups in their classes. They have good subject knowledge and effectively take opportunities to develop pupils' skills.

In the best lessons teachers show an infectious enthusiasm for their subjects and pass this on very successfully to their pupils. Teaching in the Foundation Phase is well matched to the requirements for pupils of this age and they are appropriately challenged.

A particular strength in the teaching is the very positive relationships which exist between all adults and pupils. This successfully encourages all pupils to feel confident and to share their ideas.

Where there are shortcomings, teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh language skills and to use incidental Welsh regularly in their lessons.

Assessment for learning strategies is applied across the school. All teachers involve pupils well in evaluating their own work and setting their own targets for improvement. Work is marked regularly and teachers provide helpful feedback, both orally and written, on achievement and ways to improve. They share learning aims and success criteria with pupils, which they revisit.

The school's assessment and tracking system is used well to monitor pupils' progress and to set targets. The school uses data and professional judgements very well to identify pupils in need of additional support and those who are more able and talented.

Reports to parents are good and contain comments on progress and often targets for improvement. Pupils and parents have an opportunity to respond to the reports and parents can meet with their child's teacher regularly.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for health and wellbeing is good. Pupils have good opportunities for physical exercise, feel safe in school and learn good principles for eating healthily.

The school is a very calm and orderly community with a friendly and supportive atmosphere that ensures pupils feel safe and secure. There is a strong emphasis on wellbeing and all pupils, staff and other stakeholders are valued as individuals.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

The school has effective provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of other cultures and lifestyles.

The school works effectively with many specialist services and agencies such as the school nurse, speech and language therapists and local church groups. These provide appropriate information, guidance and good support for pupils, staff and parents. There are helpful links for additional learning needs pupils with local high schools and neighbouring special schools provide good advice and training.

Support for additional learning needs is good. Pupils are identified early and given effective support; teachers and their assistants have a good understanding of their individual needs.

The school maintains detailed records of progress pupils make to the targets set for them and these are kept up to date. Parents are fully involved and there is good support for pupils at an early stage of acquiring English.

Learning environment: Good

All pupils have equal access to all areas of the school's provision, based on an inclusive ethos, which the school actively promotes and monitors. All are treated equally.

All members of the school community show mutual respect and feel equally valued regardless of their background. The school successfully promotes tolerant attitudes to ensure all are free from harassment and oppressive behaviour. Pupils show care and concern for everyone in the school, the community and the wider world.

Diversity is respected and celebrated throughout the curriculum. The study of other countries and cultures, despite the lack of ethnic diversity in the school, is well-organised and includes on-going links with a school in Kenya. A disability equality scheme and a detailed accessibility plan are in place.

The physical environment has some shortcomings. Classrooms are in need of repair and redecoration. There is a good supply of resources for learning including a good provision for outside activities for the Foundation Phase. The school has regular use of the nearby Community Hall which provides ample space for a range of school events as well as physical education.

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

The headteacher provides pragmatic leadership and works thoughtfully to balance the responsibilities he carries. All staff share a common commitment to the school and work hard together as a strong, cohesive team. They share their professional expertise willingly and have high expectations of themselves and of each other. Teachers share responsibilities readily and oversee the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 as separate sections of the school.

However, there are few opportunities for teachers with responsibility to form an overview of the needs of specific subjects and to identify strengths and areas for development within them.

The governing body is purposefully led and has a good understanding of the future needs of the school. Governors are well informed about the school's performance compared to other schools and hold the professional leadership properly to account. The school is making good progress in addressing local and national priorities. However, links with other schools, including the local Powys secondary school, in the area are underdeveloped and pupils' ability and confidence to use Welsh and English together is at an early stage of development.

Improving quality: Good

The link between the self-evaluation report and priorities in the school development plan is good. A well-established history of development planning has had a positive impact on quality and standards in the school. A wide range of evidence and performance data is carefully analysed to identify how well pupils achieve and if any underperforming is evident. Consultation with school improvement officers and staff identifies areas for development and priorities.

The school development plan identifies clear targets for improvement which are linked to school self-evaluation. It runs for three years and is clearly focused on raising standards. It contains a realistic timetable for implementation and details of priorities are linked to outcomes and resource implications. All teaching staff are aware of these priorities.

The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection. Planning for improvement is now more manageable. The role of the governing body has been strengthened. Assessment procedures and arrangements to review pupils' progress are good. The school is now following a programme to teach key, basic and learning skills.

The school's involvement in professional learning communities is at an early stage of development and links with other schools have not been established consistently enough to impact on pupils' standards. However, within school, staff work well together to raise standards.

Partnership working: Adequate

The school works well with parents and most consider they are kept well informed and feel comfortable approaching the school on any matters of concern. Links with the local playgroup are good and playgroup staff work within the school on a regular basis, ensuring continuity.

The school has a transition plan with a Welsh secondary school, but is not an active participant due to the low number of pupils who transfer there. There are long standing links with an English secondary school to which nearly all pupils transfer.

Partnerships with surrounding local authority primary schools are limited and underdeveloped, particularly in areas of sharing expertise and resources. Standardisation and moderation procedures are established within the school, but are at an early stage of development with other schools in Powys. There are strong links with the local community, but with industry and businesses they are limited. The school has partnership agreements with teacher training institutions on both sides of the border.

Resource management: Good

The school has an appropriate teacher-pupil ratio and levels of support across the Foundation Phase meet requirements.

Staff are well qualified and suitably experienced and are appropriately deployed to ensure a positive impact upon provision, wellbeing and standards. Performance management and planning, preparation and assessment time for teaching staff is in place. Arrangements for continuing professional development are weak because of a lack of contact with other schools in the local authority. Learning resources are good and enable all pupils to access all aspects of the curriculum.

The school has considered the requirement for workplace remodelling and is currently reviewing its management structure once more in the light of changing staffing needs.

The budget is carefully monitored and well managed.

Bearing in mind the standards pupils achieve and the quality of education provided against the funding it receives, the school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Care should be taken when considering this information because of the relatively small number of pupils who are assessed annually.

Pupils begin school with levels of basic skills and maturity which are in line with those expected and found amongst children of this age.

In the last five years in the national teacher assessments for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (level 2) in English, mathematics and science has been well above local and national averages and the family of schools across Wales to which this school belongs.

When these results are compared to schools considered to have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free schools meals, the results in English and mathematics have been above most of these schools. In science in the last two years the results have fallen and are below most of these similar schools.

The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (level 3) in English, mathematics and science has fallen in the last three years from an above average position previously.

In these assessments boys do not perform as well as girls. There is no significant difference at seven years of age between those who receive free school meals and those who do not.

In the last five years, results in the national teacher assessments for eleven year olds have been generally in line with the local, national and family averages. In English the proportion of pupils reaching level 4 (the expected level) in 2011 was just above these averages. In mathematics results in these assessments have been generally above local, national and family averages but fell to be in line with these averages in 2011. In science results have been consistently above at the expected level.

In the last five years results at the higher level (level 5) have in English, mathematics and science been generally well above local, national and family averages. When these results are compared to schools considered to have a similar proportion of free school meals, the school performance overall has been above most of these schools.

In these assessments girls out performed boys particularly at the higher level.

There is no significant variation at eleven years of age in the performance of those entitled to free school meals and those who are not. Those with additional learning needs make good progress and reach the standards expected of them.

From the data which the school assembles nearly all pupils make at least the expected progress bearing in mind their performance at seven years of age and many achieve well by the age of eleven.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-one parents completed the questionnaire. Nearly all had positive opinions and were satisfied with the school and felt their children liked being there. They believed that the school helped their children to settle in and to make good progress. Parents believed that pupils behaved well and that the teaching is good. They thought that all the staff had high expectations of their children and treated them fairly.

All felt that their children were encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. They felt that their children were safe in school. They were confident about approaching the school and understood the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

All parents believed that their children were helped to be mature and to take on responsibilities. Nearly all felt that the school provided a good range of activities and visits and was well run.

A few parents had concerns about the amount of additional support their children received and the information the school provided to parents. A few believed that their children were not well prepared for moving on to their next school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Forty-four pupils completed the questionnaire and the team also talked to younger pupils.

All pupils felt safe in school and knew what to do if they found work hard. Nearly all knew who to talk to if they were worried and believed that the school taught them to keep healthy. They thought that they had lots of chances to get regular exercise. Nearly all felt that they were doing well at school and they had good quality help from their teachers and other adults. They believed that they had enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Many pupils thought that homework was helpful and nearly all children behaved well at playtime and lunchtimes. A minority said that other children did not behave well and interfered with their work. The evidence of the inspection and the discussions with pupils did not confirm these views. Nearly all pupils consistently behaved well.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mr P Mathias	Reporting Inspector
Mrs O Davies	Team Inspector
Mr D Jones	Lay Inspector
Mr P Davies	Peer Inspector
Mr I 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. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

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

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

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

Core subject indicator in all key stages

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

All-Wales Core Data sets

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