



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

**Wood Memorial C.P. School
Off Boundary Lane
Saltney
Chester
Flintshire
CH4 8SE**

Date of inspection: November 2012

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Saltney Wood Memorial School is a community primary school on the outskirts of the City of Chester on the border between Wales and England. It is maintained by Flintshire local authority. However, the school does admit a minority of pupils from Cheshire.

The school describes the area that it serves as one that is generally disadvantaged with some pupils coming from areas of severe deprivation over the border. These pupils are not included in some of the school's comparative data which only considers pupils living within Wales.

There are 186 pupils aged between 3 and 11 on roll, including 17 who attend the part-time nursery. Pupils start in the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language. Seven per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. About 28% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, and this figure is higher than the county and national averages. Twenty-six per cent of pupils have additional learning needs, which is slightly higher than the national average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The individual school budget per pupil for Saltney Wood Memorial C.P. School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,098 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Flintshire is £13,748 and the minimum is £2,758. Saltney Wood Memorial C.P. School is 48th out of the 73 primary schools in Flintshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

The school was last inspected during the autumn term of 2006.

The current headteacher was appointed in January 2010 and the deputy headteacher in September 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall performance of the school is good because:

- pupils have made very good progress during the past three years;
- teaching throughout the school is generally good with effective use of classroom assistants;
- pupils receive a very good level of care and support; and nearly all enjoy school and feel safe;
- pupils have a wide range of learning experiences; and
- there are effective intervention strategies that help pupils with additional learning needs to improve.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the recently-appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for moving the school forward which all staff share;
- self-evaluation is effective and involves all staff well;
- there have been significant improvements in many aspects of the school's life and work over the last two years;
- the school has effective strategies for recognising and supporting groups of pupils who are under-achieving; and
- the school is implementing specific aspects for future development well.

Recommendations

R1 Improve the performance of pupils in assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2;

R2 develop further the role of the school council;

R3 increase the opportunities for pupils to use extended writing and information and communication technology across the curriculum; and

R4 raise the effectiveness of the governing body in setting challenging targets for improvement.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

The majority of pupils enter the school with skills that are considerably lower than normally expected for pupils of a similar age. However, nearly all pupils make significant progress throughout the Foundation Phase in each of the learning areas and continue this good progress in key stage 2.

In general, the school does not compare well with similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who attained the expected outcomes in the Foundation Phase and the expected level in every subject in key stage 2 over the past four years. However, as a result of recently introduced strategies there has been a steady and clear trend of improvement in all areas over the past two years. The current work in pupils' books and the evaluation of pupils' skills in classes indicate that pupils continue to make good progress and achieve good standards. Almost all pupils work diligently, complete their work well and remain on task.

Pupils' literacy and communication skills are generally good across the school. Nearly all pupils listen attentively to adults and other pupils during class discussions. They respond appropriately to the contributions of others and contribute successfully to group and class activities. Nearly all pupils respond to the teachers' questioning effectively. By the end of key stage 2, most are able to communicate confidently in a variety of situations.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in reading. Individual pupils throughout the school respond well to recently-introduced strategies. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in reading skills throughout the school over the past two years. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils can use their reading skills confidently to access other areas of the curriculum independently.

In the nursery and reception classes, nearly all pupils make good progress in their early writing skills. By the end of the Foundation Phase, nearly all are producing a reasonably wide range of written work. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils write clearly in a wide range of forms and for a wide range of purposes.

Pupils have a good range of numeracy, thinking and problem solving skills. Pupils' progress in Welsh as a second language is good throughout the school.

Nearly all pupils with additional learning needs achieve well against personal targets set and make good progress relative to their ability and starting points. Pupils entitled to free school meals and those with English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve their targets. There is a marked difference between the performance of boys and girls at the end of key stage 2. As a result of successful intervention programmes, the boys now do better than the girls in most areas, having been constantly doing less well over previous years.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils recognise the importance of eating healthily, keeping fit and taking part in regular exercise. Nearly all pupils feel safe, happy and secure in school. Behaviour is almost always good. All pupils show courtesy and respect to each other, staff and visitors. Where instances of poor behaviour arise, pupils know where to seek support, and staff deal well with any incidents.

Attendance has shown an upward trend over the last two years and is currently at 93.44%. There has also been a significant drop in unauthorised absences since 2011.

Nearly all pupils arrive at school punctually. There are good procedures in place for monitoring absence and follow up.

The school council and eco committee are well established and represent the views of the pupils adequately. However, the school council relies too much on adult direction and is not involved enough in discussing changes that affect pupils' school life. As pupils move through the school, they develop good personal and social skills that prepare them well for life and work outside of school.

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

The school provides an extensive range of stimulating learning experiences, which meet the needs of pupils well. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets statutory requirements. All staff work well together to plan programmes of work that build on what pupils have learnt from year to year. Target-setting and planning for individuals and groups of learners are of high quality and take careful account of pupils' prior learning. Teachers review pupils' progress systematically and regularly. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities to support pupils' learning.

In the Foundation Phase, planning for key skills is good. Staff make effective use of the outdoor environment which impacts positively on pupils' learning. Teachers at key stage 2 are beginning to identify appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' key skills.

The provision for Welsh language development and the Welsh dimension is good.

Careful planning ensures that pupils make good progress from year to year throughout the school. Most staff use Welsh regularly around the school and this enhances the progress that pupils make. Staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about their locality and the history and culture of Wales.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is promoted actively within the school. The school acts sustainably and the enthusiastic eco-committee involves the local community in its initiatives. However, there are fewer opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of global issues.

Teaching: Good

Teachers in the early part of the Foundation Phase have a very clear understanding of how to organise and plan challenging experiences for young children appropriately. This provision is a very good strength of the school. Teachers throughout the school display good, up-to-date knowledge of the subjects they teach and have clear objectives for their lessons. They explain new concepts clearly and use appropriate questioning techniques to assess learning. Classroom assistants support learners who need additional help effectively.

Lessons are well prepared and staff make effective use of resources to support and enhance pupils' learning. Teachers make good links to previous learning and plan activities to develop pupils' skills from year to year. They share learning objectives consistently with pupils and make good use of plenary sessions to review their learning. However, on a few occasions where the teaching is less effective, teachers do not challenge pupils enough and are not providing enough opportunities to enable pupils to write extensively and to use information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

Assessment of learning is effective. Assessment strategies are well developed and inform pupils and teachers of the next stage of learning. Teachers analyse the results of tests carefully to inform their planning and to provide for individual pupils' needs. There are very good systems for tracking pupils' progress and identifying where further support is required. In lessons, teachers' marking follows the school's policy consistently ('tickled pink' and 'green for growth'). Pupils' work is marked regularly and most teachers make constructive comments that help pupils to improve their own performance.

Annual reports to parents are detailed and meet statutory requirements. Parents and carers feel well informed about their children's achievements and progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance for its pupils. The school's well-developed procedures, such as the nurture groups, make a positive contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their good levels of wellbeing. The school pays particular attention to pupils' personal, emotional and educational needs, for example through the assignment of a 'key worker' to pupils on admission to the Foundation Phase.

Staff and the learning experiences they provide promote pupils' personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school encourages pupils to work well with each other and to show respect, care and concern for others.

The school provides very effective, well-focused guidance for pupils with additional learning needs. Teachers identify needs at an early stage and there is well-planned provision and support. The school has established a number of intervention groups for pupils, which effectively meet their needs. The Boys' Literacy projects are a strong example of this practice. The school provides effective pastoral support for the relatively high number of pupils who need one-to-one provision.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school values every pupil well and all pupils have opportunities to participate in all school activities. The school has a very caring and inclusive ethos. The school takes good account of pupils' backgrounds. It treats all pupils equally and successfully promotes respect for diversity and equality.

The school encourages positive attitudes and behaviour successfully. It celebrates pupils' achievement well through the newly-developed behaviour management system, which identifies and celebrates those pupils throughout school who have done well.

The learning environment is warm and welcoming. Accommodation is of high quality and is sufficient for the number of pupils. It is well maintained and the outdoor environment is inspiring and promotes learning successfully. This is a strength of the school. The school has a good range of resources that are matched to pupils' needs. Wall displays are attractive and enhance the supportive atmosphere within the school.

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

The recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the future development of the school. In a short time, they have succeeded in sharing their vision effectively with other senior leaders and staff. All staff place pupils' needs at the centre of the school's life and work. They work in partnership with families in order to support pupils and to improve attendance.

Senior leaders have been very successful during the last two years in reinvigorating the school. They know the school well and set challenging targets and expectations for the whole school. Specific strategies have been effectively created to develop elements of wellbeing and to raise standards over a period of four years. The senior leadership team ensures that its rigorous analysis of data challenges staff to improve standards and to achieve the targets given to each class. The challenging targets set so far have been exceeded each year.

All members of staff receive valuable opportunities to contribute to aspects of management across the school. They are aware of their role and responsibilities and work together closely as a team. This has resulted in a whole school approach to implementing strategies and in successfully driving forward change.

Teachers' continuous professional development is well supported by holding regular staff meetings, providing appropriate training and holding and managing annual performance reviews.

The governing body is supportive and carries out its statutory duties diligently. Governors oversee spending decisions carefully. About half the governing body took up their positions only recently. Consequently, their understanding of how to evaluate the school's performance effectively and how to set challenging targets for improvement is not fully developed.

The school has made good progress in responding to national priorities. The Foundation Phase is now well established and pupils make good use of the indoor and outdoor learning environments. The response to the School Effectiveness Framework has included involvement in very successful professional learning communities that have contributed significantly to, for example, improving the standard of boys' reading. Initiatives set up to tackle social disadvantage have proved very effective, such as the use of additional funding to employ extra staff to support children with weak social skills.

Improving quality: Good

There are effective procedures for evaluating most aspects of the school's work. As a result, leaders and managers have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is a carefully-considered programme for monitoring standards of teaching and learning. Senior members of staff have responsibility for analysing pupil outcomes and making comparisons with similar schools in Wales. All teachers scrutinise pupils' work to check the range and quality of their work. A programme of lesson observations by teachers supports the sharing of good practice. School leaders routinely seek the views of pupils and parents and this helps to inform self-evaluation. The self-evaluation report produced for the inspection is honest and accurate.

An improvement plan is compiled from self-evaluation findings. The current plan is a useful and effective document. It is concise, with a manageable number of priorities that the school is addressing in a structured way. The plan is suitably detailed, allocates responsibilities and details costs so that spending is adequately supported.

Well-established networks of professional practice support the sharing of good practice within school and with other partner schools. The school's teachers have been given guidance and shared experiences on specific learning areas such as developing boys' literacy skills. The school's successes in raising standards of boys' literacy are being shared with other schools within the local authority.

Partnership working: Good

The school benefits from a wide range of strong partnerships. It recognises that parents are important and is working to improve home-school relationships. The Family Group, where parents are invited in to lessons alongside their children, enjoys activities such as reading, improving spelling and Welsh. These activities enable parents to help their children learn, and increase the level of wellbeing within families.

Effective links exist between the school and local playgroups that help children to settle into school very quickly. There are also very good links with local schools. The group of primary schools that feed the secondary school co-operate well in many

ways. For example, they meet to standardise the assessment of pupils' work and join in various sports competitions. Transition arrangements at the end of key stage 2 are good. The school benefits from good support from the local authority.

Resource management: Good

The school deploys staff efficiently and uses their specialist skills and experience well. Support staff make a significant contribution to meeting pupils' needs in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2.

Leaders and managers monitor the budget carefully and allocate funds appropriately to support priorities in the school improvement plan. Additional funding is used efficiently in appointing, for example, specialist support staff to tackle disadvantage.

In view of the recent good progress made by the school in improving standards and the quality of its provision, the school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The baseline assessment of mainstream pupils in the reception class shows that the majority of pupils enter the school with skills that are considerably lower than normally expected for pupils of a similar age.

Pupils coming to the school from areas of significant deprivation over the border in England are not included in the figures for deprivation, used for allocating schools within their family of schools. The comparative data only includes pupils from areas with Welsh postcodes.

Looking at the performance outcomes for pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase, the proportion who achieved the expected outcome (outcome 5 or above) was slightly below the average for the family of similar schools in 2012. In English and in the Foundation Phase indicator, the performance of pupils placed the school in the lower 50% and in mathematics in the bottom 25% of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The performance outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2012 give a similar result. The proportion who achieved the expected level (level 4 or above) was below the average for the family of similar schools in all subjects. The performance of pupils placed the school, for the fourth year, in the bottom 25% of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, looking at performance over the past three years, the school has succeeded in raising standards significantly from a low base. Following the introduction of effective intervention programmes, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator in key stage 2 has risen year on year from a low of 47% in 2009 to 73% in 2012. The school has exceeded its own rigorous targets, and standards observed in the school indicate further improvement.

The attainment of the higher than expected outcome (outcome 6) in the Foundation Phase in 2012 was generally strong and placed the school above average for similar schools in English and mathematics. The school lies within the upper 50% of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, the attainment of the higher than expected level (level 5) in key stage 2 was slightly lower than the average performance of similar schools. The results for 2012 place the school within the lower 50% of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, in all subjects.

There is a slight difference in favour of the girls between the relative performance of boys and girls at the end of the Foundation Phase. However, as a result of successful intervention programmes, there is a marked improvement in the performance of boys at the end of key stage 2. The boys do better than the girls in most areas. Overall, pupils entitled to free school meals do as well as their peers in both the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

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

All pupils:

- feel safe in school and believe that the school deals well with any bullying;
- believe that the school provides lots of chances for them to get regular exercise;
- believe that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress; and
- know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard.

Almost all pupils:

- feel that they are doing well and that the school helps them to keep healthy;
- know whom to talk to if worried or upset;
- believe that children behave well so that they can get on with their work and that nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunchtime;
- believe that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work; and
- believe that the homework helps them to understand and improve their work.

Pupils' views are more positive overall than the views of pupils in other primary schools across Wales.

Parent questionnaires

There were twenty-two responses to the parent questionnaire.

Almost all who responded feel that:

- their child is safe in school;
- the school helped their child settle well when they started at the school;
- the school encourages their child to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- staff expect their child to work hard and do their best; and
- the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility.

Most feel that:

- the school is well run;
- their child is making good progress and likes the school;
- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular needs; and
- there is a good range of activities including trips or visits.

Many feel that:

- pupils behave well;
- teaching is good;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- the homework given builds well on what their child learns in school;
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress;
- they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints and are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems; and
- they are satisfied with the school;

These responses are generally the same or quite close to the views of other parents or carers of pupils in primary schools across Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Owen Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Christopher Ian Dolby	Team Inspector
Peter Howarth	Lay Inspector
David Lloyd	Peer Inspector
Ceri Williams	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