



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Derwenfa
Queen Street
Leeswood
Nr. Mold
Flintshire
CH7 4RQ**

Date of inspection: January 2014

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

Ysgol Derwenfa serves the village of Leeswood, which is located in the county of Flintshire. There are 142 pupils aged three to 11 years at the school, including 22 pupils in the nursery. The school has six classes. Around 22% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This figure is slightly above the local and national averages.

All pupils come from homes where English is the main language and no pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Pupils' ethnicity is mostly white British and the remainder are mainly of mixed ethnicity. The school identifies that around 21% of pupils have additional learning needs. Currently, very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The school was last inspected in 2008. The current headteacher was appointed in 2007. He has a class teaching commitment of 50% of each week.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Derwenfa in 2013-2014 means that the budget is £3,503 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Flintshire is £15,097 and the minimum is £2,912. Ysgol Derwenfa is 46th out of the 72 primary schools in Flintshire in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance is good because:

- overall, most pupils make good progress during their time at the school and achieve good standards in their learning and wellbeing;
- most pupils make very good progress in developing Welsh language skills;
- most pupils have positive attitudes to school and levels of participation in learning are good;
- nearly all pupils behave well;
- the quality of teaching ensures that most pupils make at least the expected progress; and
- there are positive relationships between staff and pupils that have a beneficial effect on standards of learning and wellbeing.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- leaders have a clear vision and aims for the school;
- the school has established useful internal groups of staff to implement new initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy Framework;
- the most recent self-evaluation report is detailed and includes useful analyses of data on pupil outcomes;
- teamwork is strong in the school; and
- there are effective partnerships that impact positively on pupils' learning experiences and wellbeing.

However:

- governors do not provide enough challenge to the school's leaders, either on the standards pupils achieve or the way the school monitors its deployment of resources;
- systems for self-evaluation and school improvement planning are not effective enough: and
- the current arrangements for the deployment of teaching staff have resulted in unbalanced workloads among the teaching staff with wide variations in class sizes.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve standards of pupils' writing, specifically the quality of spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation of work
- R2 Improve the quality and impact of teachers' marking
- R3 Improve links between assessment, planning and teaching at key stage 2
- R4 Ensure that the governing body holds the school to account for the standards achieved and the decisions it makes
- R5 Strengthen the link between monitoring activity, self-evaluation work and school improvement planning to make sure that the school identifies the most important areas for improvement and addresses these priorities rigorously

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are around the level expected for their age. Overall, they make good progress by the end of key stage 2.

Many pupils develop very good speaking and listening skills during their time at the school. They talk enthusiastically about learning experiences and achievements. They often use a broad range of vocabulary to present their ideas or in response to teachers' questions.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. They read with enthusiasm when reading for pleasure or when finding information about the topics they study. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils read confidently with fluency and good understanding. More able pupils display good higher order reading skills. For example, they scan text to identify specific features of language such as similes or metaphors.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their writing skills. By the end of the Foundation Phase, they write appropriately for a range of purposes. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils use a highly imaginative range of vocabulary in their written work and apply writing skills appropriately in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. However, too many pupils make repeated errors with basic spelling, grammar and punctuation. Many pupils have poor presentation skills. These factors, in combination, mean that too few pupils achieve the higher levels in their writing.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills well as they move through the school. They have a good understanding of number operations, shape, measure and data handling. They often apply these skills well at an appropriate standard across the curriculum. A minority apply their numeracy skills well in problem solving activities.

Most pupils make very good progress in developing Welsh language skills. In the Foundation Phase, they follow instructions well and develop good basic vocabulary. They also begin to read simple texts successfully. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils respond confidently to questions often using a good range of sentence patterns and vocabulary. They read well with good pronunciation and understanding. A majority produce short pieces of writing to a good standard.

Overall, most pupils who need extra support and those identified by the school as being more able make good progress. Pupils entitled to free school meals usually achieve well in relation to their individual learning goals.

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

Over the last two years, the school's performance in the Foundation Phase at the expected outcome 5 has remained the same. Performance places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for literacy and in the lower 50% for mathematical development. At the higher than expected outcome 6, the school was in the bottom 25% of similar schools in 2012 for literacy and the lower 50% in mathematical development. However, in 2013 performance improved to the higher 50% in both areas of learning.

In comparison to other similar schools, key stage 2 performance at the expected level 4 over the last four years normally places the school in the higher 50% for English, mathematics and science. At the higher than expected level 5 performance has varied considerably. The school has been in the bottom 25% and top 25% in English, mathematics and science at different points during the last four years.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they are worried. They have a good understanding of the need to eat and drink healthily and to take regular exercise. Many make good use of the school's strong extra-curricular activity programme.

Most pupils co-operate well with one another in their lessons and activities. Most work well independently and under the direction of adults. Pupils are involved well in directing their own learning by identifying aspects of topics they would like to know more about.

Nearly all pupils behave well. They show respect and care for each other and for all adults in the school. They display pride in their school and carry out a wide range of responsibilities maturely. Many pupils actively support the local community, for example to raise funds for a local skate park and all-weather sports facility. They also raise valuable funds for charities including a local children's hospice.

Attendance figures for the last two years show an overall downward trend in comparison to other similar schools. The school is now in the lower 50% of similar schools. However, attendance has shown a significant improvement during the current academic year. Rates of persistent absence are significantly below family and all Wales averages. Nearly all pupils arrive at school punctually.

The school council meet regularly and make worthwhile contributions to school life. They plan and organise fund raising activities that benefit other pupils, for example purchasing resources for use at break times.

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

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Overall, learning experiences match the needs and interests of pupils well. The school provides well for specific groups of pupils. For example, an innovative programme aimed at encouraging reluctant speakers has improved pupils'

confidence when talking in front of others. Educational visits, for example to Blist Hill and the Dewa Roman Experience, together with visitors to school, enhance the curriculum effectively. A successful initiative called 'Reading Rocks' involves members of the community visiting the school to read to and with pupils to encourage and promote enjoyment of reading. A wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities supports pupils' learning well.

Teachers plan topics thoroughly and imaginatively. They create many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in meaningful contexts. The school is making good progress in implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Framework.

Provision for Welsh language development is strong. The school also provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales, for example by participating in the Treuddyn Eisteddfod.

Teachers develop pupils' understanding of sustainability issues appropriately. They also provide pupils with suitable opportunities to learn about their role as global citizens through events such as Fairtrade Fortnight.

Teaching: Adequate

Overall, the quality of teaching ensures that most pupils make at least the expected progress. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils that have a beneficial effect on standards of learning and wellbeing. Most teachers and support staff model language very well. They have good, up-to-date curriculum knowledge. In many lessons, teachers explain tasks well so that pupils understand how to be successful. Normally, teachers match activities to pupils' needs and interests well. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour but do not consistently expect pupils to present their work neatly or to produce enough written work within lessons.

Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, in too many instances, teachers' marking is ineffective. Often, their written comments are overly positive in relation to the standards of work achieved, and do not relate well to the focus of learning activities or identify what pupils need to do to improve. Teachers do not require pupils to edit or refine their work in response to marking. Many teachers and support staff provide pupils with useful verbal feedback and question them effectively. This is often helpful in developing pupils' thinking skills.

The school has a suitable system to monitor pupils' progress. Teachers use this information appropriately to identify those pupils who require additional support or challenge. In the Foundation Phase, there are good links between assessment and planning. However, links between assessment, planning and the delivery of lessons are not strong enough at key stage 2. As a result, pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of making, for example with their writing skills. The school carries out useful standardisation and moderation activities with the local cluster of schools. This helps to ensure the accuracy of end of key stage assessments.

Parents and carers receive valuable information about their child's progress, achievement and wellbeing through regular parents' meetings and annual reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are comprehensive plans and policies in place to support the care and wellbeing of pupils. As a result, the provision for healthy living and pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. The school promotes its aim of development through care well. This is demonstrated in the positive relationships that pupils have with each other and adults. There are suitable arrangements in place for promoting healthy eating and drinking. The school also has effective systems for behaviour management. The school provides well for pupils spiritual development through a good range of topic work and strong relationships with local places of worship.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good and enables these pupils to do well. Staff identify pupils' additional learning needs early and provide them with effective support through a variety of suitable strategies. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for individuals and groups of pupils in class and during intervention sessions. The school monitors pupils' progress against their individual targets regularly and effectively. Parents receive good information with regard to their child's progress and are suitably involved in reviewing targets in individual education plans.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school provides a caring, welcoming and happy environment, where all staff and pupils are treated equally, fairly and with respect. Staff provide frequent opportunities for pupils to show care and consideration for others in the school and in the wider community. This promotes tolerant attitudes well. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The accommodation and extensive grounds are well cared for and maintained. Classrooms are an appropriate size for the numbers on roll. The school fully complies with disability access and facilities and there are appropriate equality policies in place. The school site is safe and secure. Effective use is made of a suitable range of good quality resources that meet pupils' needs well. Attractive displays of topics and pupils' work help to enhance and support learning. The outdoor learning space is a useful resource that staff use well to provide beneficial learning experiences, for example to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills in the Foundation Phase effectively.

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

Leaders have a clear vision and aims for the school, which are embodied well in the school motto 'Development Through Care'. Regular staff meetings ensure that all staff are well informed about the school's priorities as well as helping them to play an active role in the day-to-day life of the school.

Regular senior leadership team meetings focus purposefully on school improvement priorities. They use good project management processes, such as allocating sufficient time, finance and professional development, to introduce new initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities for teaching, pupils' wellbeing and in bringing about improvements, for example in the provision for Welsh as a second language. Staff also have a good shared understanding of all aspects of pupil performance. Governors are supportive of the school. Leaders provide them with useful information about pupils' performance. While governors have an understanding of the school's current performance, they do not make a meaningful contribution to self-evaluation activities. A few governors take part in learning walks to improve their knowledge of the school. However, governors do not always provide enough challenge to school leaders either on the standards that pupils achieve or their monitoring of resources.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has well-established arrangements for self-evaluation and development planning. The most recent self-evaluation report is detailed and includes useful analyses of data on pupil outcomes. However, the report is not evaluative enough as it describes what the school does rather than the impact of the actions. Leaders consult parents and pupils about their views of the school but they do not use the evidence from these surveys as part of self-evaluation. The priorities in the school development plan are broadly appropriate. They link well with national initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and have a suitable focus on improving pupil outcomes. The most recent school development plan has clear targets and appropriate plans for monitoring progress and outcomes, but it is too early to judge the impact of this plan.

The headteacher carries out regular monitoring activities based mainly on the scrutiny of pupils' books. His most recent monitoring report identifies a range of shortcomings, particularly in the accuracy and presentation of written work and the effectiveness of teachers' marking. The findings of the monitoring report match the findings of the inspection team well. However, school leaders have not used this valuable source of evidence in either the school's self-evaluation report or its plans for improvement and development. It is unclear how the findings contribute effectively to bringing about improvements.

Partnership working: Good

There are strong links between the school and pre-school playgroup that is held in the youth club attached to the school. Ysgol Derwenfa runs an effective course for parents of pre-school children at the playgroup on how they can help to develop children' learning skills before they start in the school's nursery class. These sessions prepare children well for starting school and make a valuable contribution to their wellbeing. The school has strong links with the local community and pupils take part in many local events as well as benefiting from sports coaching provided by local clubs.

The school has well-established and effective arrangements for the transition of pupils to the local high school. Visits to the high school prepare pupils well for the change of school and the next stage of learning.

Resource management: Adequate

Overall, the school has effective arrangements for the management and deployment of staff. There are suitable links between the professional development of staff and targets in the school's development plan. The school's systems for managing the performance of teachers and other staff meet requirements and are generally appropriate. However, comments after observations of classes for professional development purposes are too descriptive and do not provide leaders with a sharp and focused analysis of what needs to improve. The targets for improvement for staff are often too general and not easily measurable. They do not focus strongly enough on the issues identified in the self-evaluation report or those identified through the monitoring of pupils' work.

Teachers and other staff have the skills needed to deliver the curriculum effectively. Generally, the school's leaders make appropriate decisions about expenditure and monitor these carefully. However, the current arrangements for the deployment of teaching staff have resulted in unbalanced workloads among the teaching staff with wide variations in class sizes. While senior leaders considered the implications of this decision initially, the action taken has not produced the intended benefit of an improvement in standards in the small class. Although most pupils make expected progress, the school provides only adequate value for money because there are important shortcomings in aspects of teaching, school improvement planning and resource management.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the Foundation Phase in 2013, about three-quarters of pupils achieved the expected outcome in their literacy, mathematical and personal and social skills. This is slightly below the average for the family of schools. The proportion of pupils who achieved above the expected outcome was slightly above the average for the family of schools in all three areas of learning.

Over the last two years in the Foundation Phase, the school's performance in comparison to that of other schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, at the expected outcome 5, has remained the same. Performance places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for literacy and in the lower 50% for mathematical development and personal and social skills. At the higher than expected outcome 6, the school was in the bottom 25% of similar schools in 2012 for literacy and personal and social skills and in the lower 50% for mathematical development. However, in 2013 performance improved to the higher 50% in all three areas of learning.

In key stage 2 in 2013, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level or above in English, mathematics and science was very close to the average for the family of schools. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level was equal to the family average for English and mathematics and significantly above the family average for science.

In comparison to other similar schools, key stage 2 performance at the expected level 4 over the last four years normally places the school in the upper 50% for English, mathematics and science. Performance at the higher than expected level 5 has varied considerably during the same period.

In the Foundation Phase, girls' performance is significantly better than that of boys at the expected outcome in literacy and mathematics. At the higher outcome, girls' performance is significantly better than boys' in personal, social, wellbeing and cultural diversity skills. However, in mathematics boys' attainment is significantly better than girls'. At key stage 2, boys' performance at the expected level is normally better than girls'. At the higher than expected level, boys' performance is often significantly above that of the girls.

Overall, pupils entitled to free school meals perform as well as other pupils at the expected level. However, they do not perform as well as other pupils at the higher than expected levels.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

Primary Questionnaire (Overall)

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	
I feel safe in my school.	59	56 95%	3 5%	Rwy'n teimlo'n ddiogel yn fy ysgol.
		98%	2%	
The school deals well with any bullying.	58	45 78%	13 22%	Mae'r ysgol yn delio'n dda ag unrhyw fwlio.
		92%	8%	
I know who to talk to if I am worried or upset.	58	57 98%	1 2%	Rwy'n gwybod pwy i siarad ag ef/â hi os ydw I'n poeni neu'n gofidio.
		97%	3%	
The school teaches me how to keep healthy.	58	56 97%	2 3%	Mae'r ysgol yn fy nysgu i sut i aros yn iach.
		98%	2%	
There are lots of chances at school for me to get regular exercise.	59	53 90%	6 10%	Mae llawer o gyfleoedd yn yr ysgol i mi gael ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		96%	4%	
I am doing well at school.	56	52 93%	4 7%	Rwy'n gwneud yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		96%	4%	
The teachers and other adults in the school help me to learn and make progress.	59	55 93%	4 7%	Mae'r athrawon a'r oedolion eraill yn yr ysgol yn fy helpu i ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd.
		99%	1%	
I know what to do and who to ask if I find my work hard.	59	56 95%	3 5%	Rwy'n gwybod beth I'w wneud a gyda phwy i siarad os ydw I'n gweld fy ngwaith yn anodd.
		98%	2%	
My homework helps me to understand and improve my work in school.	56	49 88%	7 12%	Mae fy ngwaith cartref yn helpu i mi ddeall a gwella fy ngwaith yn yr ysgol.
		91%	9%	
I have enough books, equipment, and computers to do my work.	59	50 85%	9 15%	Mae gen i ddigon o lyfrau, offer a chyfrifiaduron i wneud fy ngwaith.
		95%	5%	
Other children behave well and I can get my work done.	57	29 51%	28 49%	Mae plant eraill yn ymddwyn yn dda ac rwy'n gallu gwneud fy ngwaith.
		78%	22%	

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	
Nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunch time	55	34 62%	21 38%	Mae bron pob un o'r plant yn ymddwyn yn dda amser chwarae ac amser cinio.
		84%	16%	

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Richard Lloyd	Reporting Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector
Justine Elaine Barlow	Lay Inspector
Jacqueline O'Toole	Peer Inspector
Andrew Jones	Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, 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

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.