



*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 Maes y Llan  
Maes y Llan Lane  
Ruabon  
Wrexham  
LL14 6AE**

**Date of inspection: March 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:

<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

Ysgol Maes y Llan is in the large village of Ruabon close to Wrexham. There are 164 pupils in the school including 17 in nursery and five 'Early Education' children who attend on a part-time basis. Nursery children are admitted to the school at the beginning of the academic year following their third birthday. The school is organised into six mixed-age classes.

The school describes the area it serves as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Just under 7% of pupils live in the 20% most disadvantaged areas in Wales. About 16% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is below the Wales average.

Nearly all pupils come from English-speaking homes. The school has identified 22 pupils as having additional learning needs and no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. These figures are well below national averages.

The headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Maes y Llan in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,197 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Wrexham is £8,569 and the minimum is £2,903. Ysgol Maes y Llan is 40th out of the 60 primary schools in Wrexham in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- most pupils achieve good standards in their work by the end of key stage 2;
- many pupils are confident, enthusiastic and fluent readers and most pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills;
- most pupils behave well and attendance levels compare well with those of similar schools;
- there are a wide variety of learning experiences, including effective use of the school grounds and a broad range of extra-curricular activities;
- teaching is well planned and many lessons help pupils to make good progress; and
- the school provides a high level of care, support and guidance.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- leaders have a clear vision and sense of direction that they communicate well to staff;
- leaders analyse data well to help improve outcomes for individual pupils;
- staff work well together and carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively;
- governors have a firm understanding of the work of the school and provide an appropriate level of challenge;
- there is clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on well-established systems for self-evaluation; and
- there is a good track record of making improvements.

## Recommendations

The staff and governors of Ysgol Maes y Llan need to:

R1 increase the opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in longer pieces of work, particularly in subjects other than English;

R2 reduce the use of worksheets;

R3 ensure that there is a consistently high quality of teaching in all lessons; and

R4 refine improvement plans to make them sharper and more focused.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Pupils speak well in whole-class sessions and in group work. They speak clearly and confidently, using suitable vocabulary to answer questions and provide their views. Older and abler pupils often provide extended and thoughtful responses. Most pupils listen carefully to instructions, presentations and explanations. On a few occasions, when the teacher talks for too long, they start to lose attention.

Pupils have positive attitudes to reading, and read with interest and enthusiasm. Younger pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds, and can talk about the books they like and dislike. Most pupils across the age range use a suitable variety of strategies to make sense of the texts they are reading. They increasingly develop their independence in reading and show a secure understanding of a suitable range of texts. Most read texts accurately and with appropriate expression. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils are fluent and confident readers. They understand the key features of increasingly demanding texts and can explain their views and opinions. Most pupils extract information effectively from a variety of sources. In particular, many pupils use a wide range of strategies, including highlighting and annotations, to analyse an increasingly wide range of sources of information.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. Younger pupils develop an appropriate control in their writing and increasingly acquire a suitable understanding of punctuation and spelling. They quickly expand their vocabulary and set out their work in a structured way. As they get older, pupils start to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, for example in responding to poems, providing instructions and writing accounts of their experiences and activities. Most pupils' writing contains accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar, although a few still make simple errors. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils have acquired a broad range of writing skills, often writing confidently and accurately. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of the different conventions of writing and organise their work efficiently. However, pupils across key stage 2 do not produce enough pieces of extended writing, particularly in their writing in subjects across the curriculum. This is largely as a result of the use of too many worksheets that restrict the nature of the writing that pupils produce. Pupils' handwriting is generally clear and legible, and work is well presented.

Pupils make good progress in developing their skills in Welsh second language. Performance in key stage 2 assessments is better than the average for the family of schools and compared with the Wales average. Pupils have positive attitudes to Welsh and speak with increasing confidence in a variety of situations. Their writing in Welsh is not as well developed as their speaking skills.

Over the last four years, pupils' attainment at level 2 and above at the end of key stage 1 has generally improved. Overall, it has been in line with the performance of

similar schools. Pupils' achievement at level 3 and above has been below expectations in English, mathematics and science.

At the end of key stage 2, performance improved in the three years up to 2010, but dipped in 2011. Overall, other than in 2011, performance has generally been in line with the performance of similar schools. Girls do much better than boys in English, while boys do better than girls in mathematics and science. Pupils' work and lesson observations show that most pupils achieve good standards in their work by the end of key stage 2.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils feel safe in school and many say that the school deals well with any bullying. Many understand how to become healthy through what they eat and from physical activity. Most take part in regular physical exercise. Most pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school, but there are a few instances of low-level disruption.

Attendance levels are good, and they have improved steadily over the last three years. They are now in the top quarter of levels for similar schools.

Pupils have many opportunities to become involved in decision-making in the school. In particular, the school council has undertaken a number of useful activities such as running a project to improve attendance and punctuality, organising a school shop to raise funds and helping to improve the school environment. They have a secure role in having a say in what and how they learn, for example by completing surveys about their lessons, completing self-assessment profiles and contributing to planning topics in key stage 2. Pupils participate in a wide range of community activities.

Pupils have well-developed life and social skills that they demonstrate through, for example, the 'buddy' system where older pupils help to look after the younger pupils. Pupils show respect, care and concern for others. They take responsibility for their own work and work well with other.

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

The school provides interesting and well-planned learning experiences. The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the National Curriculum. A particular strength is the use of the school environment and partnerships with the wider community to enhance learning. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities with high levels of pupil participation. The use of educational visits and visitors to the school is a strong feature that has a beneficial impact on pupils' learning.

The school has a suitable strategy to improve literacy, including provision for those pupils who need extra support to improve their reading. Planning for the progressive development of literacy skills is generally good. However, too much use of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to develop their literacy skills fully across the curriculum.

Provision for Welsh language development is generally appropriate, although opportunities for pupils to write at greater length in Welsh are limited. The use of Welsh has a secure place in the life and work of the school. Pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and heritage is developing well.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about sustainable development and there is very effective use of the school grounds to promote this. Pupils also have many opportunities to develop their understanding of global citizenship, especially through partnerships with schools in other parts of the world.

### **Teaching: Good**

Lessons are well planned, and follow a logical and progressive structure. They have clear and specific objectives that are well understood by pupils. In many lessons, teachers have suitable expectations and use questioning effectively to probe and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. These lessons capture pupils' interest effectively, contain a suitable variety of activities and proceed at a brisk pace. In a few of these lessons, teachers have very high expectations, and set particularly challenging and demanding tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs. In a few lessons, although the majority of the pupils make satisfactory progress, the pace is sometimes too slow, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher at the start of the lesson and tasks are not always well matched to the ability of pupils.

Oral and written feedback to pupils on the quality of their work is good. In many cases, marking makes useful references to the learning objectives of a lesson, and provides pupils with a clear idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils reflect well on their own success using a traffic light system in the younger year groups and a more detailed self-assessment and peer-assessment process for the older pupils.

Effective assessment and tracking procedures of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills lead to the provision of effective strategies to support the needs of the identified individual pupils. Procedures to track skills development across the rest of the curriculum are in place, but are not yet fully operational in all classes.

Parents are well informed about the achievement and progress of their children.

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

The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance, and has well-developed procedures for ensuring the health and wellbeing of pupils. This provision includes many opportunities for pupils to contribute their views on issues concerned with wellbeing, for example through completion of surveys on 'Pupil Attitude to Self and School' and in 'time to talk' sessions. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a wide range of well-planned activities and experiences.

The school works effectively with a range of external specialist agencies to deliver good support for pupils where necessary. The use of the Student Assistance Programme that involves school staff, a local police officer and the attendance officer is particularly effective in promoting pupils' emotional wellbeing.

Appropriate procedures are in place for pupils with additional learning needs. The school identifies the individuals and groups of pupils who need additional assistance and provide them with well-targeted support. Individual education plans are of good quality and are regularly reviewed and updated.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The school has a positive, inclusive ethos that values all pupils and ensures equality of opportunity. It has an appropriate disability action policy and plan, and its accessibility plan ensures that all children are given every support in accessing the curriculum. It takes positive steps to discourage all forms of harassment and discrimination.

Pupils have enough books and equipment to do their work. Accommodation is generally suitable for the numbers of pupils and the planned activities. The buildings and grounds have been improved over recent years, and are secure and well maintained. The building provides an interesting and stimulating learning environment. The school makes very good use of its extensive grounds, for example in its work as part of the Forest School initiative.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision and provides strong direction for the school that all staff understand well. There is a strong focus on the wellbeing of all pupils and improving the standards that pupils achieve. Leaders analyse data well and use it appropriately to focus on improving pupils' outcomes. The school sets challenging targets at the level of the whole school, groups of pupils and individual pupils. Teachers monitor these targets well.

Staff have clear roles, understand their responsibilities and carry these out effectively. Teams of staff work well together overall, especially in relation to planning for continuity and progression in the curriculum. Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are in place and are generally effective in bringing about improvement.

Governors are well informed about the work of the school and provide good strategic direction as well as support to the school's management team. They have a full understanding of performance data and classroom practice, and use this information to challenge the school to do better. Most governors have a responsibility for oversight of a particular aspect of the school's work and this helps to improve their understanding of the issues facing the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities appropriately.

The school takes appropriate account of national and local priorities, particularly in relation to the Foundation Phase, improving skills and the School Effectiveness Framework.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school's self-evaluation report is comprehensive, detailed and evaluative. The school also sets out the main findings of self-evaluation in a very useful and succinct summary report. Both documents contain a rigorous and thorough analysis of a comprehensive range of performance data, and identify strengths and areas for improvement. The summary report is more focused and usefully identifies the specific aspects that need improvement.

The school has well-established systems for self-evaluation, including regular use of first-hand evidence, and the analysis of a wide and appropriate range of performance information. The school takes good account of the views of pupils and parents.

The school improvement plan is based on information gained from self-evaluation activities and the need to raise standards. However, it lacks a clear enough focus on the specific actions needed to generate improvement. The actions in the plan are often too general and the targets are not easy to measure. In spite of these weaknesses in the written plan, the school's leaders and managers know what needs to be done to bring about further improvement and have a good track record of making improvements.

Staff are appropriately involved in a wide range of professional development activities, both within the school and with a large number of other schools. This is beginning to have a beneficial impact, particularly on curriculum planning. The school has led a number of training activities for other schools, for example on the development of the Forest Schools initiative.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has a wide range of well-developed partnerships with other local schools, agencies, parents and the local community. Arrangements for working with other schools in the cluster and the local secondary school are particularly good. Project work with pupils at the local secondary school helps pupils to be more confident when they start in Year 7.

Links with parents and the local community are strong. The school also has very effective links with the local businesses and community groups. A recent Creative Community Challenge weekend funded support to extend the outdoor play and Forest School area.

The school has extensive links with schools in Swaziland, Nepal and Germany. These are effective in raising pupils' awareness of global issues as well as improving their understanding of how and what pupils learn in other countries.

### **Resource management: Good**

The school manages its financial resources well. Spending is planned to meet school priorities and is monitored closely. Managers consider all expenditure on learning resources carefully to make sure that any purchases have a direct impact on improving pupils' learning experiences.

The school has sufficient well-qualified staff who are deployed effectively. Managers have invested well in support staff to provide targeted additional support for pupils, particularly in improving pupils' reading skills. This has resulted in significant measurable improvements in reading. The school has also invested well in appropriate professional development activities for staff.

Standards achieved by pupils are good and the school provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

#### Key stage 1

Over the last four years, there has been a generally steady rise in pupils' attainment in the core subject indicator (the overall performance in English, mathematics and science at the expected levels for pupils of seven years of age) at the end of key stage 1. It was above the family average in 2010 and 2011. When performance is compared with that of similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks, the school is generally performing as expected.

Pupils' attainment in English rose steadily over the last three years and was well above the family average in 2011, although it is around the average when compared with the relative attainment of similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks. For oracy, the performance has been above the family averages over the last three years. There is a similar pattern for reading, although girls' performance is much weaker than that of boys. Writing was above the family average from 2009 to 2011, but this time boys' performance was weaker than that of girls. In English at level 3 and above, performance has been below the family average for each of the last three years.

Pupils' attainment in mathematics has risen over the last three years and is now above the family average, although performance is weaker at level 3 and above. Performance in science at key stage 1 has fallen over the last three years, but it is still above the family average. As with English and mathematics, performance at level 3 and above is lower than expectations.

#### Key stage 2

In the three years up to 2010, pupils' attainment in the core subject indicator at the end of key stage 2 rose, but it fell back in 2011 so that it is now below the family average. When compared with similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks, the school is in the bottom quarter for 2011 having been around the average for the previous three years.

In 2011, pupils' performance in English shows a similar pattern to the core subject indicator, with it falling back in 2011 after a steady rise over the previous three years. When compared with similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks, the school is now in the bottom quarter after having been in the top half the year before. Pupils' attainment at the higher level 5 over the three years has risen and it is now higher than the family average. Oracy is generally below the family average, while reading and writing have fallen back in 2011 after being above the family average for the previous two years.

Pupils' attainment in mathematics over the last four years has been uneven, but it has been above the family average for the last two years. When compared with similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks, the school is in the top half,

having been in the top quarter the year before. At the higher level 5, performance is generally similar to that of the family. Performance in science was very high in the period from 2008 to 2010, but it fell back in 2011. It is now just below the family average. When compared with that of similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks, performance in 2011 was in the bottom quarter after having been in the top quarter for the previous three years.

At key stage 1, unusually, boys do better than girls in most indicators including the core subject indicator and English. The only exception is in mathematics where girls do better than boys. In key stage 2, in the core subject indicator and English girls do much better than boys and by a greater extent than the family. In mathematics and science, boys do better than girls, which is different to the usual pattern of girls doing slightly better than boys in the family and in Wales as a whole. Pupils eligible for free school meals do very well at key stage 1, but they achieve worse than family and Wales averages at key stage 2.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 81 learners in key stage 2.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and have someone to talk to if they are worried or upset. Nearly all believe that they have many opportunities to exercise regularly and most say that the school teaches them to be healthy. Many say that the school deals well with bullying, but this is a lower proportion than that found in other schools.

Nearly all pupils believe they are doing well in school, and that teachers and other adults help them to make progress. All know what to do if they find their work hard and say that homework is helpful. Most pupils consider that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

A majority say that pupils behave well in lessons and that they can get on with their work. Many also say that behaviour at playtime and lunchtime is good. The proportion saying that behaviour is good in classes and at playtime and lunchtime is much lower than the proportion saying this in other schools.

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 22 responses to the parent questionnaire. Parents gave a positive or very positive response to the questions which were generally in line with the responses from other schools.

All parents are satisfied with the school. All state that it is well run, and that their children are safe and like the school. All parents indicate that their children were helped to settle in well when they started school. All also consider that there is a good range of activities and that their children are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise. Most feel comfortable about approaching the school to discuss matters about their child's education and wellbeing.

All parents believe that their children are making good progress. They consider staff expectations to be good and say that homework reinforces learning. They also indicate that teaching is good and nearly all believe that staff support their children well. All feel that their children are well prepared for moving on to the next school.

Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress and all believe that staff treat all children fairly and with respect. All believe that pupils behave well in the school, and that the school helps them to become mature and take on responsibility.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Nigel Vaughan	Reporting Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector
Duncan Haworth	Lay Inspector
Jonathan Wright	Peer Inspector
Gylla Magee (Headteacher)	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://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

## **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.