



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 Cedewain
Maesyrhandir
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1LH**

Date of inspection: January 2013

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 Cedewain is situated in Newtown in the county of Powys. Ysgol Cedewain is a school for pupils with a wide range of complex educational, sensory and physical needs. Most pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN).

At the time of the inspection the school had 119 pupils on roll aged from two to 19. Almost all pupils are drawn from a wide area in the north of Powys local authority. Three pupils are from neighbouring authorities.

Programmes of study are individually tailored for each pupil and it is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve with national averages or to analyse trends in overall performance over time.

English is the predominant language of nearly all pupils. One pupil is from a home where Welsh is the first language. At the time of the inspection, no pupils were receiving support for English as an additional language. There are seven pupils with 'looked-after child' (LAC) status. Approximately 33% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the all-Wales special schools average of 41%.

The school has a range of general classrooms as well as specialist teaching areas for technology, science and practical subjects.

The school provides a broad curriculum and a high level of care in a safe, caring and stimulating classroom environment.

The school was last inspected in February 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

Ysgol Cedewain is a good school because:

- all pupils, including those with additional learning needs achieve good standards across the school;
- across all key stages there is good provision for pupils' wellbeing;
- staff management of pupils' behaviour is very good; and
- parents and pupils receive good care, support and guidance.

Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- senior managers have developed a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all staff;
- the school manages its resources well and provides good value for money;
- staff work very effectively as a team and have high expectations of the pupils; and
- there is a developing culture of self-evaluation that leads to school improvement.

Recommendations

R1 Improve the accommodation to meet the individual needs of all pupils

R2 Continue to develop the strategic role of curriculum and subject leaders across the school

R3 Ensure the governing body fully challenges the school to do better

R4 Strengthen the link between performance management, the school improvement plan and the training needs of staff

R5 Ensure that feedback to pupils informs them what they need to do to improve their work

What happens next?

Ysgol Cedewain 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

Across the school, pupils achieve good standards in relation to their learning needs and abilities. Pupils make good progress in achieving the agreed learning targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs). They have a clear understanding of their learning targets and more able pupils are involved effectively in setting their own goals.

Due to their complex needs, pupils make small steps of progress. These steps are carefully recorded and analysed so that staff can give groups and individuals extra help when necessary. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls, those pupils who are 'looked after' by a local authority or those who receive free school meals.

All pupils gain a range of appropriate qualifications in courses well matched to their abilities. These qualifications include ASDAN Personal Progress and Towards Independence, Agored Cymru Sensory Communication and Materials and Processes, WJEC entry level Food Technology, Science, Mathematics and English, GCSE Art and Design, Essential Skills Wales Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the Welsh Baccalaureate and the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards in bronze and silver.

Since 2008, all pupils in Year 11 have continued with their education at Cedewain and all post-16 leavers have moved on to a college, another appropriate educational placement or gained employment. Pupils in key stage 4 and post-16 gain valuable experience of the world of work which equips them well for the next stage in their lives.

Nearly all pupils make good progress with their communication skills. Less able pupils use augmentative communication well to make their needs known and express choices, for example, choosing food for lunch. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make good progress through the phases of the Picture Exchange Communication System and use pictures well, for example, to express their feelings.

More able pupils read with confidence and for pleasure. They use words and short sentences well to describe the activities they are working on and write extended pieces of work. A few pupils speak confidently in public, for example, post-16 pupils have participated in a live debate in the Welsh Government. Most pupils use literacy and numeracy skills effectively across all subjects and transfer these skills effectively from one learning situation to another.

Pupils, including those in the nurture group, improve how they manage their behaviour, display good listening skills and learn to make good eye contact. They interact well with each other and with adults in small group and whole class situations.

Nearly all pupils use thinking skills effectively. They are considerate and kind, show understanding for the feelings of others and help each other. They show respect to each other, staff and to visitors. All pupils, over time, successfully gain the skills that they need to increase their independence.

Pupils in key stage 5 make very good use of vocational opportunities to develop their skills. For example, they prepare lunch for the school's Café Tanat. These pupils are aware of health and hygiene requirements, demonstrate good literacy skills to follow recipes, use numeracy skills well to weigh ingredients and consider profit and loss and communicate confidently with customers.

Most pupils make good progress in the development of their Welsh language skills in relation to their needs and linguistic background. They understand Welsh adjectives that describe their progress, make effective use of everyday greetings and develop their speaking skills appropriately. They also show a good understanding of aspects of the culture and heritage of Wales.

Wellbeing: Good

All pupils enjoy their time in school and nearly all attend regularly unless they have periods of illness due to their medical conditions. Pupils feel that they are safe in school and know what to do and whom to talk to if they are worried or upset.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to learning and engage well with their tasks. Most pupils understand how well they are doing and are able to discuss their progress against specific targets. Pupils make good progress in developing their ability to work independently wherever possible.

Almost all pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep healthy and of the importance of exercise. Older pupils produce a good range of healthy foods in the Café Tanat and many participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities.

Nearly all pupils behave very well. They are polite and considerate, and take care of each other. They show respect for their teachers and support staff. Where pupils have particularly challenging behaviour, staff help them to manage their feelings and to remain calm.

The school council gives all pupils an influence on school life and an understanding of the democratic process. Other pupils are given additional responsibility, for example as head boy, head girl and sports ambassadors. These pupils are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and take pride in their achievements.

Pupils make good progress in developing their social and life skills. They develop an increasing awareness of the local community through their involvement in local events.

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| Key Question 2: How good is provision? |
|---|

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|-------------|
| Good |
|-------------|

Learning experiences: Good

The school successfully provides a balanced and varied curriculum across all key stages. Pupils in key stages 4 and 5 are offered a wide range of appropriate individualised accredited learning opportunities.

The school makes effective provision for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. Schemes of work and lesson plans clearly identify how pupils will develop these skills. Practical activities help pupils to successfully develop their thinking skills, in and outside the classroom. In all classrooms, there are appropriate ICT resources which are used effectively to enhance learning experiences.

In key stages 4 and 5, those pupils who are capable of doing so are given good opportunities to access valuable work experience. Those pupils who are unable to directly access work experience, benefit from visits to employers and taking part in school projects such as Young Enterprise Awards.

Four Cedwain pupils join mainstream classes in other mainstream schools. One pupil left the school at the end of Year 9 to successfully attend a local mainstream secondary school. More able pupils in key stages 4 and 5 gain valuable experiences, working alongside mainstream peers at a local college with appropriate support.

Provision for the Welsh dimension, for example St. David's day celebrations and visiting the Welsh Government, helps pupils to understand the cultural and historical context of Wales. Staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and use their Welsh language skills.

The school successfully promotes an understanding of the environment and of pupils' place in the wider global community. The school has a number of gardens and polytunnels where they produce a wide selection of fruit and vegetables on a large scale. Pupils actively recycle materials in school and discuss issues around improving their school environment. This is done successfully in class and during specific whole school events such as the eco-day.

Teaching: Good

In nearly all lessons the quality of teaching is at least good. Teachers and support staff work very well together as a strong and effective team. All staff work together to plan and deliver valuable learning opportunities to all pupils in the school. In the very few lessons where teaching was less than good, the lessons lacked appropriate pace and challenge for some pupils.

All staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Teachers and support staff have strong working relationships with, and extensive knowledge of, the pupils they teach. Nearly all lessons are planned well to challenge pupils and are appropriate to their individual needs and abilities.

In the few lessons where teaching is excellent, staff provide engaging and varied activities that comprehensively meet the needs of individual pupils. In these excellent lessons, pupils are challenged to achieve their full potential.

Teachers make good use of assessment data to plan lessons and set appropriate targets for each pupil. Teachers use individual education plan (IEP) targets well to monitor and evaluate progress. Pupils are fully involved in setting and reviewing these targets every term. In a few lessons, more able pupils were encouraged to comment on their own work and that of other pupils.

In all lessons, staff provide appropriate verbal feedback and encouragement to pupils. Pupils' work is marked well in all subjects and provides appropriate feedback to pupils. However, not all feedback is clear enough about what the pupil needs to do better in order to progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Ysgol Cedewain has very effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing. A strength of the school is the caring, nurturing environment which encourages pupils to think about each other's needs.

The school has effective arrangements for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, assemblies are often interactive, where children of all abilities take an active part in proceedings.

The school works well with a wide range of specialist services to provide pupils with good quality care and guidance to make well informed choices about their learning.

IEPs are clear and identify the additional learning needs of the pupils well. Staff monitor these plans effectively to support pupils learning and behaviour.

Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is good.

The school has Healthy School status. Throughout the curriculum, pupils learn the importance of healthy eating and exercise.

The headteacher, staff and governors share the school's vision well, creating the positive ethos throughout the school. They have implemented comprehensive policies and plans, which focus on successfully meeting the wide range of pupils' needs.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school has a very calm and caring ethos where all pupils are treated with respect and dignity. The school actively promotes the understanding of equality and diversity.

The school makes best use of a very difficult layout and the school is spread over large grounds and has 10 small buildings. Most of the classrooms are ageing portable structures and, in some cases, are in need of urgent maintenance and repair. The distance and obstacles between classrooms mean that a lot of time and effort is spent safely escorting pupils with complex sensory and physical needs around the school site. This can be particularly challenging during bad weather, as was clearly highlighted during the inspection.

The buildings and layout also severely limit the provision of specialist equipment for severely disabled children. Access to specialist equipment is not available in all areas of the school limiting access and mobility for some pupils. There are sufficient and accessible toilet and changing facilities in all buildings, although some of these require upgrading.

Despite these many challenges, the staff within the school have managed to provide as warm and inviting an environment as is possible. Inventive approaches and the continued hard work and goodwill of staff have made the environment work.

Displays around the school and in classrooms are bright, cheery and informative. They celebrate pupils' achievement, stimulate their interest and enhance learning. Learning resources are of a suitable quality and generally meet pupils' individual needs. ICT equipment is generally sufficient.

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

Leadership: Good

The recently appointed headteacher and senior leaders have established a clear vision for the school which is now shared by all staff. They have implemented comprehensive policies and plans, in a relatively short period of time, which focus well on meeting the wide range of pupils' needs.

Senior leaders work consistently across the school to support and challenge colleagues and communicate high expectations to those they manage. They have created a school ethos where staff, pupils and others, who work in the school on a regular basis, feel valued.

The school meets both local and national priorities effectively. This includes the local authority's priorities for special schools, the Foundation Phase and the School Effectiveness Framework. The school is developing an effective range of partnerships with other providers to share expertise and develop staff competence.

The governing body shares the school's vision and is very supportive of the school. It meets regularly and has appropriate sub-committees in place. Governors visit classes and have attended the school council as part of their role. They monitor the school's performance and are beginning to challenge the school to do better.

Distributed leadership is developing well and is starting to have a positive impact on the standards achieved by the pupils. However, the role of subject and curriculum co-ordinators is, at present, under-developed and inconsistent across the school.

Managers monitor and evaluate staff performance regularly through an inclusive performance management process. All staff contribute effectively to school planning and improvement.

Leaders use the performance management and appraisal procedures well. However, training needs are not yet fully linked to the schools' improvement plan.

Several staff train colleagues in-house and also provide valuable outreach training and support for mainstream schools, particularly in developments in the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

The process of self-evaluation and development planning is well established. There are clear outcomes that inform future priorities and, where necessary, the actions that may be required for further improvement. Key stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff contribute to self-evaluation, both informally and more formally.

There is an active school council that provides learners with valuable experiences to develop their communication skills and their ability to make decisions. The school council is effective in promoting positive change through its actions.

The school has identified expanding accreditation as a priority. Pupils at key stage 4 and post 16 now have the opportunity to obtain appropriate qualifications, for example Entry Level and Essential Skills Wales, and more able pupils take GCSEs. Vocational courses now offer opportunities for gaining accreditation. The school has recently introduced the Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate post sixteen qualification. This area of the curriculum is well planned and a strength of the school.

The effective networks of professional development within the school enable staff to develop and share their professional knowledge successfully. However, this work needs to be further developed.

Partnership working: Good

The school works closely with an extensive range of partners. They have well established partnerships with the community, the local authority, parents and carers. Partnerships with Careers Wales, other schools in the area and the local college of further education ensure that pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education. All of these partnerships have a positive effect on the provision for pupils and the standards they achieve.

The school has developed good partnership arrangements with the local mainstream secondary school, which allows the schools to share resources. For example, older pupils access the science and food technology rooms in the secondary school. A few pupils from Ysgol Cedewain study alongside their peers in mainstream schools.

Links with local businesses and organisations in the community and other outside agencies ensure that pupils benefit from an extended range of valuable learning experiences and resources. This promotes the pupils' social development and enhances their understanding of the world of work.

Parents and carers are very appreciative of the information and support they receive from the school. They feel well supported by the staff and value this support.

Resource management: Good

The school has a good range of experienced, specialist teachers and other staff who are deployed very effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils. Support staff are used appropriately and make a very important contribution to the pupils' learning experiences and to the quality of the care support and guidance.

Performance management procedures are now beginning to identify staff's training and developmental needs better. Staff have appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. This enables staff to be effective in ensuring that the pupils are provided with a wide variety of personal and learning experiences.

Spending priorities link closely with the school's improvement plan and are reviewed regularly by the governing body. The governors work closely with the school leaders and the local authority to ensure best value.

The school's financial management is efficient and effective. In view of the good standards achieved by the pupils, the effective teaching and careful management of resources, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twenty-five parents completed questionnaires and, overall, most are satisfied or very satisfied with the school and feel that it is well run. All of them agree that their child likes school, feels safe there and was helped to settle in at the start. All parents feel that their children make good progress, that teaching is good and that staff expect the children to work hard. All parents agree that the school encourages children to take on responsibility, be healthy and take regular exercise. All parents agree that pupils behave well in school and almost three quarters strongly agree.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Thirty-five pupils responded to the questionnaire and, overall, are very positive about their school. All pupils feel safe and most feel that they are doing well in the school. Most pupils feel that the school deals well with bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. Almost all pupils agree that the school teaches them to be healthy. All pupils feel that they have enough books and equipment and most pupils feel that children behave well so they can get their work done.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Mike Munting | Reporting Inspector |
| Linda Williams | Team Inspector |
| Meinir Rees | Team Inspector |
| Alec Clarke | Team Inspector |
| Julie Price | Lay Inspector |
| Maxine Pittaway | Peer Inspector |
| Angela Davies | School 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 ALN terms

ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

ALN: additional learning needs

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorders, includes Asperger's Syndrome

ATR: additional teacher resource

BESD, ESBD or SEBD: Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties

CoP: Code of Practice

HI: hearing impairment

MSI: multi-sensory impairment

PMLD: profound and multiple learning difficulties

SpLD: specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia

VI: visual impairment