

**A report on**

**Ysgol Y Fron Juniors  
Halkyn Street  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7TZ**

**Date of inspection: 18 - 20 January 2011**

**by**

**Mr Goronwy Morris**

**Reporting Inspector, under contract to Estyn**

**for**

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

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

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

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

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

<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 y Fron is situated in the small town of Holywell in Flintshire. It provides education for pupils between seven and 11 years of age. The vast majority of the pupils are admitted to the school from the nearby infant school and the intake covers the full range of ability. Pupils are taught through the medium of English, and Welsh is taught as a second language. All pupils come from English-speaking homes and there are no pupils from ethnic minority groups.

Currently there are 133 pupils on roll. Approximately 40% of these are entitled to free school meals. This is substantially higher than the local education authority's (LA) average of 11% and the all-Wales average of 18%. At the time of the inspection, 60 pupils are listed as requiring additional learning support, 11 of whom have statement of special educational needs. A Resource Centre, which receives separate funding from the LA, caters for 10 pupils from across Flintshire, all of whom have statements of special educational need for moderate learning difficulties.

The school was last inspected in October 2005. Pupil numbers have reduced significantly since then. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol y Fron CP School is £3,396, which compares with a maximum of £7,635 and a minimum of £2,660 for primary schools in Flintshire. The school has the 24th highest budget per pupil out of the 74 primary schools in Flintshire.

## 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 school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress in relation to their ability, interests and previous performance;
- there is a welcoming ethos that ensures that all pupils are happy, safe and secure;
- teaching is good and pupils benefit from an interesting curriculum; and
- the quality of leadership and management is good.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has good prospects for improvement because:

- it has demonstrated its ability to raise standards;
- the headteacher, staff and governors are committed to continued improvement; and
- it recognises that active involvement with its professional learning community is having a positive impact on the life and work of the school.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in Welsh as a second language;
- R2 enable pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work;
- R3 further improve assessment procedures and tracking of pupil progress; and
- R4 ensure that the link between self-evaluation outcomes, priorities for development and pupil targets is clear?

### *What happens next?*

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, achieve well in most areas during their time at the school.

Over the past four years there has been a significant improvement in standards of attainment at key stage 2 in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school's rate of progress for pupils in mainstream classes is better than the national improvement over this period. The number of pupils attaining the higher level 5 has improved significantly since 2007. Pupil performance at this level in 2008 and 2009 compares favourably with those of more able pupils in similar schools.

Overall results in 2010 show a dip in standards with the number of pupils achieving the core subject indicator (CSI), the expected level in English, mathematics and science in key stage 2, significantly below the family, Local Authority and Wales averages. This was due to the high number of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) which led to a considerable variation in the attainment of boys and girls in that year group.

Over time, girls generally perform better than boys in attaining the expected level for their age. The performance of boys relative to girls shows a significant improvement

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in 2008 and 2009 when the gap between girls and boys achieving level 4 narrowed considerably and compared favourably with national averages..

Pupils with ALN achieve well against personal targets and make good progress relative to their ability, interests and previous performance. Pupils within the Resource Unit achieve very well. Most pupils entitled to free school meals and more able and talented pupils make good progress in line with their ability.

Most pupils speak confidently and listen well and many pupils read an appropriate range of texts accurately and with expression. Most pupils' writing skills are good throughout the school. They write for different purposes and in different styles with increasing confidence; however, pupils' extended writing skills are not as well developed. Few pupils write at length in subjects across the curriculum.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they enjoy their lessons. They are well motivated, engaged and eager to learn. Nearly all pupils respond positively to their teachers. They concentrate well and persevere with their tasks and activities. They work very well together.

Standards in Welsh are adequate. The majority of pupils achieve well in their structured lessons, but very few pupils respond confidently to questioning. They rarely use Welsh around the school. Pupils' awareness of the Welsh culture and heritage is good.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils have positive and realistic attitudes to adopting healthy lifestyles, including taking regular exercise. They are happy and feel safe and secure in school. Most pupils are polite and their behaviour is consistently good. This is reflected in their positive and generally enthusiastic attitude to learning.

The School Council plays an active part in the school. Members feel that their suggestions are taken seriously and believe that they have a say in the life of the school. They are also involved in a few community initiatives. Pupils, generally, have very little opportunity to comment on how and what they are taught.

Average percentage attendance over the last three years, at 93%, is in line with similar schools. Overall punctuality is generally good.

Pupils' personal, social and life skills are developing well and they are well prepared for life and work outside school. They undertake a range of responsibilities with maturity. Their entrepreneurial and decision-making skills are good. Pupils' ability to work independently under the guidance of their teachers is good. Generally, however, their ability to recognise for themselves how to improve their work is insufficiently developed.

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

Teachers provide a good range of interesting learning experiences within and beyond the school. The curriculum requirements at key stage 2, including religious education are well met. The curriculum, which is broad and balanced, 'meets the needs of most pupils and builds on pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupil's learning is further enhanced through a range of activities including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and residential stays for older pupils.

Provision for the development of skills is good. Effective curricular development and careful planning provide good opportunities for pupils to develop communication, numeracy and information communications technology (ICT) systematically across the school in a broad range of contexts. Opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills are very well planned.

A good range of opportunities enable pupils to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues. There are fewer opportunities help develop their global citizenship.

Planning for Welsh language development is adequate. The provision for Welsh language development within the classroom is inconsistent and the use of Welsh outside the classroom is not well developed. Opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of the Welsh dimension are good.

**Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have positive working relationships with pupils and this fosters a good working environment. They make good use of a wide range of teaching strategies which ensure that most pupils are motivated and engaged. Teachers plan effectively; identify clear objectives to meet the needs and interests of most pupils. Where learning is less effective learning tasks are not always appropriate to meet the needs of all abilities and an over dependence on worksheets limits the opportunity for extended pupil responses. Adult support is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

Assessment, recording and reporting on pupils' achievement meets statutory requirements. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress in learning. Strategies have been implemented to help pupils review their own learning and they are becoming increasingly involved in setting their own targets. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide positive and constructive feedback. The school's active participation in the local arrangements for standardisation and moderation in the core subjects is helping to strengthen teacher assessment. The schools' own moderation and standardisation of pupils' assessment is at an early stage of development. Reports to parents and carers are clear and informative. Parents feel that they receive good information on their children's progress.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

Effective arrangements exist to support pupils' well-being and healthy lifestyles. These arrangements contribute well to pupils' development and wellbeing and support their learning effectively. Learning experiences provided, including visits and visitors, contribute constructively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and world-wide cultural development.

The school liaises effectively with an extensive range of external agencies and services. There is good support for pupils transferring from the neighbouring infant school and for those transferring to the local secondary school.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. Procedures for monitoring and prompt follow up of unexplained absences and lateness lack routine, rigour and urgency.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Procedures and systems for identifying those who need additional support are effective. Provision in the Resource Unit is good and the pupils integrate effectively in mainstream classes for some lessons where they are supported in special groups so they can achieve appropriate standards. The Unit also provides support for mainstream children who have ALN. Progress made by these pupils is assessed regularly and targets for improvement are met. There are strong links with specialist external agencies. Parents and carers are kept well informed and the individual education plans are regularly evaluated and updated.

**Learning environment: Good**

The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils to learn and play, with sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. Resources are well matched to pupils' needs.

The accommodation is colourful, relevant and stimulating and it supports and enhances pupils' learning. The buildings and grounds are well maintained. There are no green field areas within the school grounds. However, the town's football pitch is used for events such as sports day.

The school ensures equal opportunity for all pupils. It is an inclusive community which actively promotes equality. The curriculum is fully accessible to all. Provision for collective worship meets statutory requirements and contributes well to pupils' spiritual development through opportunities for reflection and worship. Provision to enhance pupils' understanding of diversity is not fully developed.



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

The quality of leadership and management at the school is good. The head teacher, staff and governors share the school's vision of 'happily working together' and this is reflected well in the positive ethos throughout the school. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have a good understanding of the school's needs; they work well together to set appropriate priorities and provide a strategic direction for the school. Team work is encouraged and appreciated. Regular staff meetings provide good opportunities for all to discuss progress and to reflect on and share good practice.

Job descriptions set out the roles and responsibilities of staff but they are not yet updated to reflect current responsibilities for individuals.

The governing body has a good understanding of its responsibilities. Governors have a strong interest in the day-to-day life of the school and are very supportive of the head teacher and staff. They are developing a good awareness of how the school performs by discussing performance data. They act effectively as critical friends.

The school meets local and national priorities well. Appropriate attention is given for example to the development of thinking skills and partnership working.

### **Improving Quality: Adequate**

Procedures for evaluating and planning for improvement are adequate. The head teacher, staff and governors are committed to maintaining and improving standards. Performance data is carefully analysed to identify how well pupils achieve and any underperforming that is evident. However, there is only a minimal amount of evaluation based on first-hand evidence and not all staff are involved in assessing outcomes. There are no formal arrangements in place to seek the views of parents and other interested parties.

The self-evaluation report tends to be descriptive rather than evaluative and lacks clear and concise judgements on outcomes. Although the school identifies some important areas for development the link between the self-evaluation report, priorities in the school improvement plan (SIP) and pupils' targets for improving their work is not clear. However, evidence shows that the school has made good progress in relation to pupil attainment over the past three years.

The governing body is fully involved in discussing, commenting and challenging the findings of the self-evaluation report.

There are good examples of effective teaching practice being shared within the school. The school pays good attention to Performance Management and members of staff are given every opportunity to acquire new skills. There is good evidence of the impact of training on pupil outcomes. A good example of this is the development of 'thinking skills' across the key stage.

**Partnership working: Good**

Partnerships with parents and the local community are good. There are good partnerships within the local family of schools and the nearby high school. In this respect; moderating pupils' work in English and mathematics is beginning to lead to a better understanding amongst teachers of assessment methods and standards of achievement. The school's involvement within its professional learning community is effective and has a positive impact on the life and work of the school.

Links with various charities and agencies promote the wellbeing of pupils well. However, the school's links with local employers are very limited.

**Resource management: Good**

Resource management is good. All teachers have appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum effectively. There are a wide range of resources that are used effectively to support teaching and learning, but there are shortcomings in resources to support the teaching of Welsh. Good use is made of the space available.

Teachers make good use of their planning, preparation and assessment time. The school meets statutory requirements for performance management and implementing the Workload Agreement.

The link between priorities for improvement and spending, where appropriate, is clear. There is robust and efficient management of the school's budget. The school gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Fourteen parent questionnaires were returned and all expressed the view that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the school. All agree their child likes the school, feels safe and settles in well. All parents believe that their children behave well, make good progress at the school and that teaching is good. They say that staff expect the children to work hard and to do their best and believe that all children are treated fairly and with respect. All parents also say that children receive appropriate support in relation to any particular individual needs. They feel they are well-informed about their child's progress, although a very few also say that they do not understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. All parents who expressed an opinion believe the school is well or very well run.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Most of the pupils completed the questionnaire. Nearly all say they feel safe in the school and know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset. Nearly all think that the school deals well with any bullying. They say that the teachers and other adults help them learn and make progress and that they know whom to ask if they find the work difficult. Nearly all the pupils believe that they are doing well at school and that homework helps them understand and improve their work. They say that they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work. Most pupils think that other children behave well and that they can get their work done. Most say that children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Mr Goronwy Morris	Reporting Inspector
Mr Merfyn Lloyd Jones	Team Inspector
Mr Kerry Jones	Lay Inspector
Mrs Christine Lunt	Peer Inspector
Mr Peter Davies	School Nominee

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**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' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 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	R	Y1	Y2	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:

Key stage 1	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