



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

**Maesyrhandir C.P. School
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1LQ**

Date of inspection: October 2012

by

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



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

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

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

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

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

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

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Context

Maesyrrhandir C.P. School is situated in the southwest ward of Newtown, Powys. It serves a catchment area that is recognised as one of the most socially deprived and economically disadvantaged in Powys and has high levels of unemployment.

There are 175 pupils aged three to 11 on roll, including nine who attend the nursery class full-time. Pupils are taught in single age classes, with the exception of the nursery and reception class. A local authority learning resource unit is located at the school but nearly all the pupils registered come from the school's catchment area.

Nearly all pupils are from a white ethnic background and speak English as their first language. No pupil speaks Welsh at home. There are seven pupils with English as an additional language.

The school identifies that around 44% of pupils have additional learning needs and nearly 41% are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the local authority and national average. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Following the appointment of the previous headteacher to another school in April 2012, the deputy headteacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher. There are currently seven full time teachers and six part time teachers at the school.

The school was last inspected in 2006.

The individual school budget per pupil for Maesyrrhandir C.P. School in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,652 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Powys is £8,253 and the minimum is £3,087. Maesyrrhandir C.P. School is 52nd out of 99 primary schools in Powys in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- pupils are beginning to make good progress in their literacy skills;
- the overall quality of teaching and assessment is adequate;
- the school is an inclusive community, where relationships are positive and pupils are valued;
- the quality of care, support and guidance is good;
- partnerships with the community are good; and
- standards of behaviour are very good.

However:

- attainment levels are consistently lower than the family of similar schools average;
- a significant minority of pupils do not make the expected level of progress in developing their reading and writing skills and very few pupils write well at length; and
- in key stage 2, many pupils make little progress in developing their Welsh speaking, reading and writing skills.

Prospects for improvement

The school is judged as having adequate prospects for improvement because:

- there is insufficient clarity in the overall strategic direction of the school;
- although a number of new initiatives have been introduced, they have not had time to improve pupils' standards;
- although the school improvement plan focuses correctly on improving standards the actions identified do not give a clear direction to members of staff; and
- the governing body's role in self-evaluation and monitoring standards of attainment is underdeveloped.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve standards of attainment at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.
- R2 Further improve pupils' reading and writing skills.
- R3 Improve pupils' Welsh second language skills.
- R4 Improve the provision for writing, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.
- R5 Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that lessons are well paced and well planned.
- R6 Develop the strategic management role of the governing body in relation to raising standards of attainment.
- R7 Improve the school improvement plan so that actions to bring about improvement are clear.

What happens next?

The school 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?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Nearly all pupils start school with levels of skills well below those normally expected for their age, especially in language, literacy and communication.

Across the school, the majority of pupils work productively in lessons and respond enthusiastically to the tasks provided for them. They generally, make satisfactory progress in their learning as they move through the school. Many recall previous learning well and by the time they are in Year 6 they become increasingly confident in developing their thinking skills, acquiring new knowledge, and applying these to new situations. However, more able pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Given their low starting point, the majority of pupils in the Foundation Phase make adequate progress in developing their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. However, more able pupils are not challenged well enough to develop their reading skills and, as a result, they often do not make good progress. Although most pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes, only a minority make the expected level of progress.

At key stage 2, the majority of pupils' skills in reading and listening are sound. Many listen appropriately and contribute sensibly in lessons. By the end of the key stage, a majority of pupils read with confidence and use their skills competently when researching information in books or when using the computer. Generally, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed. Very often, poor handwriting and presentation of work mar the quality of what pupils are recording. Few pupils write well at length in subjects across the curriculum.

In the Foundation Phase, a minority of pupils understand and respond appropriately to a range of simple questions and instructions in Welsh. In key stage 2, many of the pupils make little progress in their oral, reading and writing skills in Welsh. Pupils' awareness of the culture and history of Wales is appropriate.

Many pupils with additional learning needs make good progress and achieve well relative to their abilities. Pupils that speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other groups of pupils.

Pupils in the Foundation Phase do not perform as well as pupils in other schools at either the expected or higher levels. In key stage 2, pupils' performance levels are generally below the average for other schools.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues. They understand the importance of regular exercise and the need to eat healthily. All pupils feel safe in school and say that little bullying or harassment occurs.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy the range of activities offered. Most collaborate well when working in pairs and in groups.

The behaviour of nearly all pupils is very good both within classes and at break and lunchtimes. Most pupils are polite and courteous, and show respect for each other.

The school council plays a useful 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 were excited about the council's recent involvement in interviewing candidates for the vacant headteacher's post.

Pupils are regularly involved in community initiatives and take part enthusiastically and with pride.

Pupils are beginning to develop the skills necessary to understand how well they are doing; this is particularly evident at the end of key stage 2. However, many throughout the school have yet to develop an understanding of what they need to do to move on to the next stage of learning.

Attendance at over 93% compares well with the average for similar schools. Most pupils arrive punctually for school.

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

A broad and balanced curriculum meets most learners' needs. The school provides a range of interesting learning experiences, but tasks are not always appropriate to meet the needs of more able pupils.

Provision for the development of pupils' oracy skills is good and recent provision to develop pupils' reading skills has been skilfully implemented. Pupils' reading records show a marked improvement in reading ages. However, planning for the development of pupils' writing, numeracy and information and communication technology skills is underdeveloped.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs has been recently extended and strong systems are now in place. These are already having a positive impact on pupils' reading skills.

Lesson time given to the development of Welsh as a second language is not sufficient and opportunities for pupils to use Welsh outside the classroom are not consistently supported. The promotion of pupils' knowledge and understanding of Wales history and culture is appropriate in many classes.

The school has an established eco-council, which is active in promoting sustainability within school. It has a clear influence on the school's work, such as improving and developing the school grounds so that it has a more welcoming appeal for pupils. There are few activities that develop pupils' awareness of their role as global citizens.

Teaching: Adequate

Members of staff and pupils have good working relationships and treat each other with respect. All staff create a positive learning environment. Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively, ensuring that there is a purposeful working atmosphere in all classes.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is too variable. In the best lessons, teachers use practical activities and strong subject knowledge to engage most pupils well. However, in a significant minority of lessons, the pace is too slow and opportunities to extend pupils' learning are missed. A few teachers do not give clear enough explanations. As a result, pupils are not sure what is expected of them. The work of support staff is well focused and they make a valuable contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

All staff mark pupils' work regularly but they do not consistently provide sufficient feedback to help pupils understand how to improve. The school has recently developed comprehensive monitoring systems to track pupils' progress. Teachers generally make appropriate use of a range of assessment data to plan learning opportunities. However, teachers' use of targets to inform their planning and to help pupils' improve their work is at an early stage of development.

Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning vary too much from class to class. Annual written reports keep parents well informed about their child's progress and meet statutory requirements.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring community that successfully promotes pupils' wellbeing. There are robust anti-bullying procedures in place and almost all pupils know whom to approach for advice and guidance when required. Provision for personal, social and moral development is good but provision for cultural development is not as effective. The school liaises well with a range of specialist services to provide additional support for pupils when required. Induction programmes are tailored well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and transition arrangements within school and between other primary schools and the high school are good.

Members of staff identify pupils with additional learning needs at an early stage and provide them with a good range of appropriate support. Their progress is tracked carefully and as a result many make good progress in line with their abilities. Clearly targeted support for groups of vulnerable pupils has resulted in significant improvements, particularly in improving attitudes and behaviour.

There are valuable links with the local authority's learning support unit, based at the school, where beneficial shared teaching and learning takes place.

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

Learning environment: Good

The school is very welcoming to pupils, parents and visitors. There is an inclusive ethos where all pupils are valued and receive equal access to the school's provision. Appreciation of the diversity of other faiths and cultures is effectively promoted through curricular topics and acts of collective worship.

The school provides a stimulating environment for learning. Displays are bright and attractive and help to recognise and celebrate the work of pupils.

Most classrooms are spacious, and all have good quality resources which staff and pupils use purposefully. The main hall is a good size and is used well for multi-purpose activities such as games, assemblies and after school clubs. Relevant use is made of the central courtyard area for outdoor learning, whilst other outdoor areas are being developed as playing fields, a garden area for community use and for forest school provision. Overall, the buildings and grounds are well maintained.

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

The headteacher, members of staff and governors share a commitment to promoting pupils' wellbeing. There is a strong sense of common purpose that nurtures these ideals successfully, but this focus has not impacted sufficiently on pupils' attainment.

All members of the senior leadership team have clearly-understood job descriptions and they carry out their individual and collective roles conscientiously. There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff.

The school is currently undergoing a period of uncertainty relating to its leadership structure. As a result, it lacks a clear strategic vision. However, leaders are continuing to promote the values that contribute to making the school a caring and orderly community that is conducive to learning. Arrangements for performance management now include all members of staff and whole-school objectives, such as all staff being responsible for teaching a structured and consistent reading programme. Governors support the school conscientiously, but do not have enough involvement in evaluating the quality of the school's provision or planning for improvement. They do not challenge the school well enough about the standards it achieves.

The school has taken positive steps towards meeting national priorities, particularly towards improving literacy and tackling deprivation. The Foundation Phase is well established, although the school's involvement in professional learning communities is only at an early stage of development.

Improving quality: Adequate

The process of self-evaluation has improved in recent years, but leaders have not yet embedded a culture of continuous self-evaluation in the school. The current acting headteacher has included the senior management team and other members of staff in the process but other groups, such as pupils, governors and parents, are yet to become involved.

Monitoring by subject co-ordinators leaders is not rigorous enough. Although they undertake lesson observations they have little involvement in the detailed scrutiny of pupils' work or talking to pupils to gather their opinions. The self-evaluation report gives a detailed description of many aspects of the school's life and work, but there are sections in the report that are not evaluative enough in relation to pupils' progress and the standards they achieve.

There are a sensible number of priority areas in the school improvement plan, which focuses correctly on improving standards. However, the actions identified are not focused sufficiently to give members of staff a clear direction on how to improve pupil outcomes.

Involvement in networks of professional practice within the school and beyond is now taking place. Within the school, members of staff share their professional knowledge purposefully and successfully. The school's initiative to raise standards in literacy is recognised beyond the school as a model of good practice. Its impact in improving pupils' reading and writing skills is already evident.

Partnership working: Good

The school works effectively with a range of partners. Links with parents are good; they are well informed about their child's learning. The Family Learning Programme is well attended and has helped to strengthen the links between home and the school. Workshops have ranged from outdoor learning, cookery and basic skills sessions in numeracy and literacy. This has helped parents to have a better understanding of work which their children do.

The school works well with the local community. Working in partnership with local groups has enabled the school to develop its grounds, which now provide a useful and stimulating outdoor learning environment.

Many pupils benefit from the school's close liaison with support agencies such as health and social services. There are strong links with the emergency services, the Youth Offending Team and the local sports centre.

The school manages transition effectively. Pupils moving to the secondary school are well prepared.

Resource management: Adequate

There are enough suitably qualified members of staff to teach the curriculum effectively. Teachers and support staff are deployed appropriately and they benefit from a performance management system that identifies their training needs successfully.

Books, computers and other resources are generally of good quality and there are enough to meet the needs of all pupils. The standard of accommodation is good. The building is well maintained and secure.

The school's headteacher and bursar monitor the school's spending carefully and keep the governing body well informed.

In view of the adequate standards attained by pupils, the school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Nearly all pupils start in the school with skills well below those normally expected for children of their age, especially in language

In 2012, the proportion of pupils attaining the Foundation Phase indicator was well below the family of similar schools and national averages. In language, literacy and communications, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level (outcome 5) was below the family and the national averages. Very few pupils achieved the higher level (outcome 6) in any area.

Boys perform better than the girls in mathematical development but girls do better in language, literacy and communications and in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

The performance of pupils in 2012, when compared with that of schools in the same free school meals Group, placed the school in the lowest 25% of schools for the Foundation Phase indicator and in the lower 50% for language, literacy and communications skills, mathematical development and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

At key stage 2, in 2012, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator was just below the family of similar schools and national averages. Pupils' attainment at the expected level (level 4) was below family and national averages in English, mathematics and science. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level (level 5) in mathematics in 2012 was above the family of schools average and only just below the national average. When compared with relative performance levels of schools in the same free school meals group, pupils' performance has been consistently in the lower 50% or lowest 25% for the past four years. Results in 2012, however, show an upward trend. They are now much closer to the family of similar schools and national averages.

Boys do better than girls in each of the three core subjects. The percentage of pupils entering the school with additional learning needs is higher than the national average. Generally, these pupils make appropriate progress in relation to their age and abilities.

Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as the other pupils across the school.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent and carer questionnaire

Thirty-eight parents or carers completed the questionnaire.

All parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child:

- likes school;
- is encouraged to keep healthy and to take regular exercise;
- is safe at school;
- is helped to become more mature to take on responsibility, and is being well prepared for moving on to the next stage of his/her education; and
- was helped to settle in well.

All parents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- the school is well run;
- teaching is good and staff expect their child to work hard and do his or her best;
- they feel comfortable about approaching the school with any suggestions or problems; and
- there is a good range of activities provided.

Nearly all parents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- staff treat all children fairly and with respect; and
- pupils behave well in school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Eighty-eight key stage 2 pupils completed the questionnaire.

Nearly all pupils:

- say that they feel safe in school;
- consider that the school deals well with any bullying;
- say that they know whom to talk to if they are worried or upset;
- say that the school teaches them to keep healthy;
- believe that they are helped to learn and to make progress; and
- know whom to ask if they find work hard.

Most pupils:

- believe that they have plenty of opportunities for regular exercise;
- feel that they are doing well at school; and
- consider that homework helps them to improve.

Many pupils:

- think that they have enough books and equipment; and
- say that pupils behave well at playtimes and lunch time.

Only a majority of pupils think that other pupils behave well so that they can get their work done. This response is below the average response for other primary schools in Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Mervyn Jones	Reporting Inspector
Chris Dolby	Team Inspector
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Tamasine Croston	Peer Inspector
Sue Wilcox	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

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.