

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Rhes-Y-Cae Voluntary Controlled
Primary School
Rhes-y-cae
Holywell
Fliintshire
CH8 8JQ**

School Number: 6643004

Date of Inspection: 17 November 2008

by

**Glyn William Gaskill
5539**

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Rhes-Y-Cae Controlled was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Rhes-Y-Cae Controlled took place between 17/11/08 and 18/11/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Glyn William Gaskill undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **short** inspection.

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 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 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 National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Rhesycae Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Primary School serves the small community of Rhesycae. It provides for boys and girls from the age of three to eleven.
2. The number of pupils on roll is 26 which includes three children who attend half-time in the nursery. There are two classes. The number on roll dropped significantly in April 2008 after being reasonably steady for a few years with 40 to 50 pupils on roll. Children are admitted to the nursery in the September following their third birthday. At the start of the current term, the school introduced the Foundation Phase for nursery and reception children, that is children under the age of five, and is phasing it in for years 1 and 2.
3. The socio-economic background of the area is described as neither prosperous nor disadvantaged. Eight per cent of pupils claim free school meals entitlement. This is well below local and national averages. Some 25 per cent, a relatively high number, have special educational needs. All pupils use English as their home language and are of white, UK ethnic origin.
4. The school was last inspected in November 2002. In April 2008, the long serving head teacher retired and an acting head teacher was appointed from the teaching staff at the school. The current teaching staff, with the exception of the acting head teacher, has been appointed since April 2008. New appointments have also been made to learning support and secretarial staff.
5. The school has received both the *Basic Skills Quality Mark*, *Healthy Schools* recognition on two occasions and holds the *Eco schools Green Flag* award.

The school's priorities and targets

6. The school aims to provide a caring community in which all persons are treated with dignity and respect with high expectations for all pupils' academic and personal development.
7. Current priorities for development include the implementation of current national initiatives regarding the curriculum and assessment, raising standards in English and mathematics and further developing monitoring to improve development planning.

Summary

8. Rhesycae primary school is accurately self-critical and has a very positive spirit to continually improve provision for its pupils. There have been significant changes to staffing but, working closely with all staff, governors and the local authority, the acting head teacher has brought about sensibly prioritised, positive change. It is a supportive, caring and happy school.
9. The school is well aware of the need to raise standards and its assessment procedures are being effectively used to do this. The inspection team agreed with all but one of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The team considered that the management of resources is good which was better than the school's self-evaluation.

Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	3
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	3
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	3
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	3
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

10. Overall, pupils of all ages and backgrounds make steady progress in their academic work and good progress in their personal development. Throughout the school there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Higher attaining pupils make reasonable progress.
11. Statutory baseline assessment shows that children start in the school with standards which are just above the local authority averages.
12. Because of the very small number of pupils, National Curriculum assessments at the end of each key stage are not published in detail. In recent years, with the exception of 2008, results at the end of key stage 2 have been very high in all comparisons. In 2008, results were well below those of all and similar schools. Over the last few years, National Curriculum assessments results at key stage 1 have been generally very high in mathematics and science but below average in English.
13. In both classes, most pupils' achievement in their use of English to support their learning across the curriculum has good features which outweigh shortcomings. Their use of mathematics is good in the infant class but has

shortcomings in the juniors. Standards in the use of information and communication technology is good for the under-fives and in key stage 1. Pupils in key stage 2 make insufficient use of information and communication technology to promote their learning.

14. Pupils creativity is good in key stage 2 but less so in key stage 1 and with the under-fives. In both classes, standards in pupils' problem solving have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Across the school, pupils' bilingual skills are underdeveloped. In both classes, pupils' understanding of the heritage and culture of Wales has good features which outweigh shortcomings.
15. Most pupils' personal, social and learning skills are good for nearly all pupils in the juniors and for many in the infants. A minority of pupils in key stage 1 and the under-fives do not sufficiently involve themselves in given activities. The organisation of pupils' work in key stage 2 has improved to an acceptable standard in recent times.
16. Many pupils are becoming familiar with their recently introduced targets for improvement and this is having a positive effect on progress.
17. Pupils' are adequately prepared for participation in the workplace and well equipped for involvement in the local community.
18. The average level of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is 94.7 per cent. This is the same as the national average and above local authority averages. Punctuality is good throughout the school day.

The quality of education and training

19. The quality of teaching has good features which outweigh shortcomings. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0	50%	50%	0	0

20. The findings of the 2006-7 Annual Report [primary] of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales states: *The quality of teaching is good or better [grade 1 and 2] in 80 per cent of lessons and the quality of teaching is outstanding [grade 1] in 14 per cent of lessons.* The overall quality of teaching across the school does not compare too favourably with these findings.
21. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together. Relationships between adults and pupils are mainly good and often promote positive learning.
22. Planning for lessons is very thorough and for the under-fives takes good account of the Foundation Phase outcomes. Learning activities are clearly explained to pupils so they know what they have to do. Learning resources

are well organised and sufficient for the planned activities. There are a few examples of pupils being challenged and stimulated with probing questions.

23. Learning objectives [what is planned to be learned] are effectively shared with pupils and used to guide the whole lesson but this is not consistent. Where there is consistency, lessons are purposeful and have a good pace. On occasion, there is a lack of effective strategies to involve all pupils in purposeful learning.
24. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but only occasionally does it show pupils how to improve. Homework effectively promotes progress in reading but lacks an established structure for other areas. The school is aware of these situations and is revising its policies.
25. The school's arrangements for assessment, reporting and recording are good.
26. Assessment is regularly undertaken in order to follow the progress all pupils make. Teachers use a good range of approaches when making reliable judgements about the standards pupils achieve. There has been significant use made of assessment in recent times to effectively build on pupils' previous learning.
27. The school provides all pupils with full access to a balanced curriculum which meets legal requirements. Overall, the school has appropriate arrangements to meet the needs and abilities of its pupils.
28. The educational provision for the under-fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right. The school has perceived that one aspect of the new Foundation Phase is that children will get involved in new learning when they are ready. This has resulted in a lack of intervention by adults when a few children have not shown a positive interest in the learning activities planned for them. The school has plans and strategies designed to put these matters right.
29. Educational visits and visitors bring a relevance to pupils learning. Out-of-school-hours activities are currently limited to the after school care club. Provision for pupils' bilingual skills is limited.
30. The overall provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural is good. The promotion of pupils understanding of sustainable development is outstanding. Health education and an understanding of local citizenship are well catered for but the promotion of global citizenship is lacking.
31. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. The school provides a happy, welcoming and caring learning environment for pupils. The school has clear, well documented arrangements which appropriately contribute to pupils' safety and well being when in its care. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school makes good provision to ensure the inclusive education of all pupils regardless of their background or ability.

Leadership and management

32. There is a good sense of common purpose amongst all school staff and governors to constantly improve provision in the school. The acting head teacher provides purposeful, sensitive leadership. The local authority has been very active in providing appreciated support to the management of the school.
33. Considering that all teachers and learning support assistants are very new to their roles or appointment in school, much hard work has been done to improve provision in the school.
34. The continuing professional development for all staff is successfully provided. All staff know their roles well.
35. The governing body has improved its ways of working and is increasingly effective in its role. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities.
36. The process of self-evaluation and school development planning lacks an established structure. Whilst the school development plan is firmly linked to raising standards, it is not easy to follow and lacks precision.
37. The school is well staffed with teachers and learning support assistants who are appropriately qualified and suitably deployed. The school secretary, caretaker, mid-day and other supervisory staff all make a positive contribution to pupils' well being.
38. There are limitations to the school's accommodation but it is managed very well so that pupils receive their entitlement. Finances and learning resources are managed well. The school has made steady progress in addressing the key issues of the last inspection and provides value for money.

Recommendations

39. In order to further improve the school needs to:
- R1 * Raise standards in the use of English across the school and in mathematics in key stage 2 to support learning across the curriculum.
 - R2 In key stage 2, raise standards in the use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum.
 - R3 Improve attitudes to learning for a few pupils in the Foundation Phase and key stage 1.
 - R4 * Continue to improve bilingualism across the school.
 - R5 * Make teaching consistently good.
 - R6 * Further develop the self-evaluation process leading to an effective and clear school development plan.
- * The school has identified these areas in its development planning.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

40. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
41. Overall, pupils of all ages and backgrounds make steady progress in their academic work and good progress in their personal development. Throughout the school there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the realistic targets set for them in their individual education plans. Higher attaining pupils make reasonable progress.
42. Baseline assessments indicate that children start in the school with standards which are just above the local authority averages. The educational provision for the under-fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right.
43. Because of the very small number of pupils, National Curriculum assessments at the end of each key stage are not published in detail. In recent years, with the exception of 2008, results at the end of key stage 2 have been very high in all comparisons. In 2008, results were well below those of all and similar schools. The school expected an outcome of this nature knowing the backgrounds of the pupils involved. However, the targets set with the local authority were only partially met. Over the last few years, National Curriculum assessments results at key stage 1 have been generally very high in mathematics and science but below average in English.
44. Overall, most pupils' achievement in their use of English and mathematics to support their learning across the curriculum has good features which outweigh shortcomings.
45. Across the school, standards in reading are good but pupils are not sufficiently applying this to their learning across the curriculum. Standards in speaking and listening are good at the key stage 2 and for most pupils in key stage 1 but are limited for the under-fives. The quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum is insufficiently developed for nearly all pupils, across the school.
46. In both classes, nearly all pupils make occasional use of mathematical data tables and graphs. This aspect is good in the infants but very limited in the junior class. In both classes, pupils make appropriate use of measuring, such as in their design technology work. In key stage 2, pupils' general competence in mathematics is lacking.
47. Pupils creativity is good in key stage 2 but less so in key stage 1 and with the under-fives. All pupils have been involved in producing a wall hanging and

key stage 2 pupils have produced church services and been involved in dance and theatre events. Aspects of creativity, such as role play, are not sufficiently developed in the infant class. In both classes, standards in pupils' problem solving have good features which outweigh shortcomings.

48. Standards in the use of information and communication technology are good for under-fives and in key stage 1. Pupils in key stage 2 make insufficient use of information and communication technology to promote their learning.
49. Across the school, pupils' bilingual skills are underdeveloped. Little incidental Welsh is heard in the classroom or on the school yard. However, key stage 2 pupils can conduct basic discussions in Welsh when prompted. In both classes, pupils' understanding of the heritage and culture of Wales have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
50. Most pupils' personal, social and learning skills are good with no important shortcomings. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2, most in key stage 1 and many of the under-fives apply themselves well to their learning. Pupils in key stage 2 stay on task consistently, show motivation when working and use their time productively. They co-operate willingly with each other and with adults. A minority of pupils in key stage 1 and the under-fives do not sufficiently involve themselves in given activities resulting in limited work output. In key stage 2, pupils' organisation of their work has improved to an acceptable standard in recent times.
51. Many pupils are becoming familiar with their recently introduced targets for personal improvement in English and mathematics. This aspect is in its early days but is giving pupils a clearer picture of what they need to do to improve. They have a good understanding of how well they are doing in reading from the graded reading schemes.
52. Pupils have a good knowledge of the different beliefs, customs and traditions of people from different countries. They show respect for diversity within society, in the school and in the community.
53. Apart from a few pupils in the infants' class, nearly all pupils are well behaved, considerate and courteous. This contributes positively to the quality of life in the school. Most pupils show a positive respect for each other, adults and the school environment. They enter and move around the school in a quiet, orderly and purposeful manner settling into their classrooms quickly. Their developing self-confidence helps them take a degree of responsibility for their own attitudes and behaviour.
54. Most pupils have a good understanding of the behaviour that is expected of them and agree that good behaviour is well promoted, recognised and regularly rewarded. They respond appropriately to these expectations. There are extremely few reports of recent incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour with no exclusions during the last year.

55. Pupils' adequate knowledge and understanding of the workplace is helped by occasional visitors to the school. For example, the police community liaison officers and a librarian. However, these experiences are not consistently built on through the school and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the workplace is insufficiently developed. Nearly all pupils' have a good knowledge of their community and participate enthusiastically in many church and community events.

56. The average level of attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection is 94.7 per cent. This is the same as the national average for schools with similar free school meals entitlement and above the local authority and national average figures for all schools. The main cause of pupil absence is sickness. Unauthorised absences are very rare. Punctuality is good at the start of, and throughout, the school day allowing sessions to start promptly without delay or disruption.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

57. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
58. The quality of teaching has good features which outweigh shortcomings. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
0	50%	50%	0	0

59. The findings of the 2006-7 Annual Report [primary] of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales states: *The quality of teaching is good or better [grade 1 and 2] in 80 per cent of lessons and the quality of teaching is outstanding [grade 1] in 14 per cent of lessons.* The overall quality of teaching across the school does not compare too favourably with these findings.
60. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together. Learning support assistants are well briefed and effective in their work. Relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils are mainly good and often promote positive learning.
61. Planning for lessons is very thorough, securely linked to National Curriculum requirements and includes key skills. Planning for the under-fives takes good account of the Foundation Phase outcomes. The progress of individual pupils is systematically checked on a daily basis and changes made to future plans where needed. This effectively promotes progress.
62. Learning activities are clearly explained to pupils so they know what they have to do. Learning resources are well organised and sufficient for the planned activities. This effectively contributes to the best use of lesson time. There are a few examples of pupils being challenged and stimulated with probing questions and given the time to give their views.
63. Learning objectives [what is planned to be learned] are effectively shared with pupils but this is not consistent. Whilst there are examples of precise and attainable learning objectives which guide all aspects of a lesson, including a final summary, this is not always the case. Where there is precise and consistent use of learning objectives, lessons have a good pace and challenge for learners. On occasion, there is a lack of effective strategies to involve all pupils in purposeful learning.
64. Pupils' work is regularly marked, often giving pupils' encouraging comment but only occasionally does it show pupils how to improve. Homework is well

established and effective for promoting progress in reading but lacks an established structure for other areas. Parents consider the arrangements for homework could be more clear and inspectors agree. The school is aware of this situation and is working at revising its homework policy.

65. The school's arrangements for assessment, reporting and recording are good with no important shortcoming.
66. Assessment is regularly undertaken in order to track the progress pupils make. Teachers use a good range of approaches when making reliable judgements about the standards pupils achieve.
67. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly through the use of teachers' assessments, standardised tests, computer programs and day-to-day assessment. There has been significant use made of assessment in recent times to effectively build on pupils' previous learning. Assessment is particularly thorough in English and mathematics and methodical in all the remaining National Curriculum subjects and religious education.
68. There are well established meetings with the local primary schools and the associate secondary school to come to a common interpretation of standards in the core subjects.
69. The school introduced pupils to personal targets for improvement at the start of the current term. Much has been done to effectively promote pupils' understanding of the purpose and nature of assessment. In the early years and key stage 1, verbal feedback is used effectively to help children understand the progress they make. Key stage 2 pupils, with help from their teacher, are well equipped to make judgements about their own progress. Pupils have not been given clear strategies to set their own targets.
70. Procedures for providing information to parents about their children's progress are good. In general, parents are happy with the two consultation evenings during the year to discuss their children's work. Parents value the annual reports they receive on their children's progress. The reports give a clear picture of pupils' achievements in all subjects. Valuable comments are provided by teachers regarding pupils' general development and those include guidelines about future progress.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

71. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
72. The school provides all pupils with full access to a balanced curriculum which meets legal requirements. Overall, the school has appropriate arrangements

to meet the needs and abilities of its pupils. Commercial and local authority schemes of work have been adapted to meet the needs of the school.

73. The educational provision for the under-fives has some weaknesses, but there is evidence that these weaknesses can soon be put right. Much progress has been made in planning for the new Foundation Phase. The school has perceived that one aspect of this new initiative is that children will involve themselves in new learning when they are ready. This has resulted in a lack of intervention by adults when a few children have not shown a positive interest in the learning activities planned for them. The school has plans and strategies designed to put these matters right.
74. The school makes suitable plans for the development of pupils' key skills. The use of communication, numeracy and information and communication technology are suitably highlighted in curriculum and lesson planning. The school is aware of the need to plan for the progressive development of these skills as pupils move through the school.
75. The provision for promoting bilingual skills and reflecting the language and culture of Wales has good features that outweigh shortcomings. Appropriate attention is given to *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*, which is the study of the heritage and culture of Wales. Pupils visit appropriate places of interest and celebrate St. David's Day, with the school eisteddfod being well attended by parents. There are insufficient opportunities to develop pupils' bilingual knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
76. The school makes suitable provision for educational visits and visitors to the school which bring a relevance to pupils' learning. Visits to places of historical significance, attending a formal orchestral concert and visiting artists and members of the community all make a good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. There are currently no out-of-school-hours clubs, in addition to the after-school care provision. Pupils report that they enjoyed a football club and a book club in the previous term. There is no provision for residential stays or adventurous outdoor activities. There is an exceptionally successful Eco committee of pupils.
77. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings and there is an effective provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. These aspects are well integrated into the school's daily life. Pupils appreciate the need for rules, which they helped compile. The rewards and sanctions in school regarding behaviour are very well known. Whole school acts of collective worship help to reinforce the school's values and a sense of community. Provision for collective worship fulfils statutory requirements.
78. The school is an integral part of the local community and has a high profile in community publications and events. The school has good links with other local primary schools and with the designated high schools. The school has no current links with any teacher training establishments. Nursery nurse

students and high school pupils are often placed at the school for their work experience.

79. The school has no documented strategy or policy in place to increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the world of work. Very few partnerships or formal links with employers or local industry exist and, therefore, the current provision of effective work related education experiences is limited. No teachers have recently undertaken visits to other organisations, or been involved with industrial or commercial placements and use their experiences to enrich the curriculum.
80. The school has an all-inclusive ethos. It has realistic expectations of its pupils and strongly promotes equality in everything it offers. Any incident of stereotyping is promptly and effectively challenged. Policies for promoting and practising equality of access, racial equality and equal opportunity are consistently implemented by all staff.
81. Provision of education for sustainability is outstanding. Pupils are fully involved with sustainable development issues and there is a well established Eco committee. The school has been awarded the much valued Green Flag award for its activities promoting sustainability. The small garden/wildlife area is used to enhance pupils learning in this area.
82. Energy conservation, paper recycling, composting and litter picking are well promoted by the school and practised by dedicated pupils. In addition, sustainability is effectively promoted through the formal curriculum, notably in science and geography.
83. Global citizenship is promoted through the pupils' charitable work and also through geography. However, overall, the promotion of global citizenship is underdeveloped. This is an aspect identified by the school in its development plans.
84. Opportunities to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills, such as buying, selling and marketing are limited. Developing pupils' entrepreneurial skills is another area of further development identified by the school in its development plans.
85. As they progress through the school pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning, and to be actively involved with a range of community based activities. Nearly all pupils respect and appreciate their surroundings, both locally and further afield.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

86. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

87. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. Arrangements for pupil support are well planned and managed. The school provides a happy, welcoming and caring learning environment for pupils. Nearly all parents consider their children are happy in school, and they are satisfied with the help and guidance provided for their children.
88. Overall, relationships between staff, parents, members of the local community and nearly all pupils are strong and constructive. The school has an 'open door' policy which helps foster good relationships. Parents have good formal and informal access to teachers to discuss their child's progress or any other matter related to their education. The links that exist with parents ensures that the school understands their views about many aspects of school life.
89. Very few parents help in school on regular basis but parents feel welcomed and valued when they do. There is a relatively inactive parents/teachers association. Until recently, school newsletters were produced and distributed when the need was felt. They are now produced on a regular two-weekly basis, providing parents with useful information about dates, school activities and events.
90. The positive ethos, the family atmosphere and the established induction arrangements for pupils joining the nursery helps them settle into school life quickly. Due attention is given to reduce pupils' concerns about moving from the infant class to the juniors. The transfer arrangements for pupils moving from Year 6 to the secondary school are generally effective.
91. Topics related to health education are contained within the schools' personal and social education programme and reinforced by the effective promotion of health related issues. The school is actively involved with the healthy schools initiative and has achieved the second leaf standard. Pupils' well being is further promoted by effective use of a broad range of available external support services such as the emergency services, the educational welfare officer and medical advisors.
92. Attendance registers are correctly marked promptly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils' attendance is accurately recorded. The monitoring and follow up procedures for absence lacks rigour and accuracy. Attendance targets for the next three years have been established.
93. The school has high expectations of good standards of behaviour and has effective measures for dealing with bullying or inappropriate behaviour. Bullying is not seen as a problem by both parents and pupils and they have confidence that, should instances arise, they will be dealt with fairly and swiftly. The extremely few pupils who display challenging behaviour are supported appropriately.
94. Pupils' good attendance, punctuality and behaviour are recognised and celebrated.

95. The school has clear, well documented arrangements which appropriately contribute to pupils' safety and well being when in its care. Risk assessments, in particular those associated with off-site visits, are undertaken and appropriately documented. In conjunction with the local authority, the school is reviewing the full range of risk assessments.
96. Many members of the school staff are suitably trained in first aid. Pupils have an appropriate awareness of health and safety. Good procedures are in place to fully meet the needs of pupils who are unwell or who have suffered an injury whilst in school.
97. Child protection arrangements follow recommended good practice with designated named persons and a nominated governor. All staff are aware of the signs of possible child abuse and the specific procedures they must closely follow. Relevant complaint and appeal procedures are in place.-
98. The school has an effective race equality policy and pupils' multi-cultural education is developing well. Through personal and social education and assemblies, pupils are given a good understanding of the diversity of race, cultures and belief within today's society.
99. All pupils, regardless of their social, linguistic or ethnic backgrounds are given the same rights and opportunities. Equality is often used as an assembly topic and is incorporated in the personal, social and health programme. The school actively encourages pupils to participate in all activities.
100. There is a well established school council which also takes on the role of an Eco committee. All councillors know their roles very well and are proud to talk of their work. This has involved allocating monitoring duties to pupils, choosing healthy food for the school tuck shop and raising funds to adopt an animal at Chester Zoo. Their outstanding achievement is getting the *Eco Schools Green Flag* award. Pupils are very familiar with the democratic process and how meetings are organised. This gives them a good understanding of local and national government.
101. The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good with no important shortcomings. The school's arrangements fully meet the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales.
102. Pupils' special needs are identified from an early age and arrangements made to effectively provide for them. The school has a very thorough understanding of the needs and circumstances of all its pupils. Individual education plans are clearly written and have achievable targets within realistic timescales. The plans are thoroughly reviewed on a regular basis and new targets set as appropriate. The school benefits from the support of an appropriate range of external support agencies when needed. Communication between the school and these agencies is good.
103. Administration of special educational needs is very methodical. Teachers and learning support assistants are fully involved with the monitoring of pupils'

progress and providing appropriate teaching. Early indications are that a very recently introduced programme to support pupils' reading is successfully promoting pupils' motivation and standards. Parents are well informed about special educational needs provision for their individual children and very supportive.

104. The school has very recently received guidance from the local authority on provision for more able and talented pupils in the school. More able and talented pupils have already been identified from the nursery onwards. Provision for these pupils is adequate but the school is looking at ways to improve this.
105. The present accommodation arrangements do not allow access for wheelchairs to all parts of the school and there are no designated toilets for disabled pupils and visitors. The school has an appropriate disability access plan to accommodate pupils or adults with a disability. The school has an appropriate disability equality scheme and action plan which has been devised with the local authority. The school makes good provision to ensure the inclusive education of all pupils regardless of their background or ability.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

106. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
107. There is a good sense of common purpose amongst all school staff and governors to constantly improve provision in the school. The acting head teacher provides purposeful, sensitive leadership and fully involves all staff in manageable and effective developments. The local authority has been very active in providing appreciated support to the management of the school.
108. Considering that all teachers and learning support assistants are very new to their roles or appointment in school, much has been done to improve provision in the school. There is a growing confidence to make informed decisions about policies and procedures taking fully into account the administrative time involved and the impact on standards. There is very effective formal and informal communication between all staff. These aspects result in a common understanding of provision and standards in the school. The acting head teacher, teachers and learning support assistants are all very dedicated and hardworking.
109. Leadership and management responsibilities have been sensibly allocated to staff. Most of these responsibilities are shared, which is appropriate, considering the small size of the school.
110. Arrangements for the continuing professional development of staff is firmly based on established procedures for performance management. Newly and recently qualified teachers receive training relevant to their needs. Learning support assistants are fully involved as part of the school team and receive effective training linked to their duties. All staff have appropriate job descriptions, agreed where applicable, and know their roles well.
111. The governing body has very recently reorganised itself. Prior to the current term there were no sub-committees and all work was taken up by the full governing body. The sub-committees are adopting local authority terms of reference to outline their areas of responsibility. Governors report that these arrangements are making more efficient use of their time. The governing body is well informed by regular reports from the acting head teacher. In addition, individual governors have specific responsibilities and have met with staff to discuss these areas. Governors monitor progress against targets in the school development plan on a regular basis. Overall, the school takes good account of national priorities. The governing body meets its statutory duties.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

112. The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.
113. The school is self critical of its performance and provision and seeks ways to improve. There is a formal system of questionnaires to gather the views of teachers and older pupils on an annual basis. This does not extend to all staff, parents and governors. Whilst the current main priorities for the development of the school are relevant and well know to staff, there is not a clear system as to how they were arrived at. The school lacks an established formal system where the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils are collated and then prioritised into a plan for future development.
114. Teachers make good use of assessment data and lesson observations, including those by local authority officers, to identify strengths and weaknesses in standards and provision. In addition, judgements are also made by looking at pupils' work.
115. The school development plan is very ambitious and very firmly linked to standards. It is a difficult set of documents to follow. The overall timescale is for three years but it is not clear when particular developments are planned for. The plan is a mix of true development and also a calendar for routine administrative events, such as individual education plan reviews and baseline assessment dates. Several events are costed but there is no obvious criteria for success. Measurable outcomes, for example in terms of standards, are not sufficiently considered.
116. The self-evaluation report for this inspection is well laid out against Estyn's seven key questions. The response to each key question deals well with most of the issues in the guidelines for each question. The inspection team agreed with all but one of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The team considered that key question seven was grade two, which was better than the school's self-evaluation. The school has made steady progress since the last inspection, particularly in addressing the key issues

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

117. The findings of the inspection team do not match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report.

118. The team judged the management of the use of available resources was good. The limitations in the classroom buildings is outside the direct control of the school.
119. The grade in this key question is higher than the grade in key questions 1 and 2. This is because all staff are either new to the school or new to their roles and there has been insufficient time for aspects of key question 7 to impact on management and standards.
120. There is a very good ratio of teachers to pupils. Teaching staff and learning support assistants are appropriately qualified and suitably deployed. The continuing professional development programme ensures that all staff have adequate opportunities to update their subject knowledge and be informed of current educational developments.
121. Learning support assistants successfully support groups or individual pupils throughout the school day and are valued members of the school community. All staff are committed to providing a secure, supportive environment for all pupils.
122. Daily administration is efficient. The school secretary, mid-day staff, caretaker and those who run the breakfast club and after-school care all make a very effective contribution to pupils' well being and the smooth running of the school. The school is well maintained and clean.
123. The school has appropriate resources to meet the needs of the planned curriculum. There is an on-going, thorough audit of learning resources on a subject-by-subject basis. Effective improvements have been made to support learning in several subjects and in the Foundation Phase. Aspects of provision for further enhancement of the Foundation Phase have been identified and for more computer programs to support learning. Good use is made of loan services for learning resources from the diocese and local authority library.
124. Whilst the school is making good use of its accommodation, many facilities are inadequate. There is no school hall but the school has worked closely with the local authority to ensure the village hall can be used for physical education.
125. The prefabricated junior classroom is of adequate size and well managed but does not have running water and is some distance from the main school building. Pupils have to walk across the school yard for toilet facilities and the lack of a water supply in the classroom limits practical activities.
126. A new access door from a room adjoining the infants class leads to a small garden area which goes some way to promoting children's learning, particularly in their understanding of growing plants. There is no easy access to an outdoor learning area for the under-fives to develop their physical and creative skills.

127. Teachers make good use of their planning, preparation and assessment time to develop work for their own classes and complete assessment administration. Resources are used well for the purposes of workforce remodelling.
128. The budget is well managed with effective support from the local authority finance officer. Governors are taking an increasingly active role in monitoring expenditure. The most recent auditor's report found a few minor issues relating to finance and these have been put right. Since that report the school has become involved in new ventures, such as the after-school care club, and is in the process of rationalising financial administration with the local authority. Overall, the school gives value for money.

School's response to the inspection

The findings of the inspection report confirm the steady progress made since the previous inspection, and confirm that the school provides a happy, welcoming and caring learning environment, with high expectations of good standards of behaviour.

We are pleased that the contribution and dedication of support staff including caretaker, secretary and mid-day staff is acknowledged. In addition we are delighted that the report judges the management of resources and accommodation to be good.

The report recognises that our arrangements for assessment, reporting and recording are good and that the school development plan is very firmly linked to raising standards. We do however acknowledge the need to ensure that there is clear success criteria for the content of the school development plan.

Our existing plans to further develop our monitoring procedures will include continuing to raise the quality of teaching and learning across the school. We have already liaised with Athrown Bro regarding ways to improve bilingualism across the school.

The first recommendation of raising standards in English and mathematics has an action plan currently in place. We will continue to liaise with local education authority advisors to develop these subjects and also information and communication technology as key skills.

We will write an action plan in response to the recommendations in the report and our school development plan will be updated accordingly. A copy of the inspection action plan will be sent to all parents. The action plan will be discussed at each governing body meeting and progress reported to parents.



Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Rhesycae VCP
School type	Controlled
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Address of school	Rhesycae, Holywell, Flintshire
Postcode	CH8 8JQ
Telephone number	01352 780473

Head teacher	Mrs Tracy O'Hare [acting]
Date of appointment	April 2008
Chair of governors	Rev Hugh Burgess
Registered inspector	Mr Glyn Gaskill
Dates of inspection	17 – 18 November 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	1.5	5	1	6	1	4	3	3	24.5

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	2	1	2.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	8.8
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	7.5
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	11.5
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.3

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection			
Term	N	R	Rest of school
Autumn 2007	89.4	97.2	96.1
Spring 2008	98.2	no pupils	97.5
Summer 2008	90.7	no pupils	91.0

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	8%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	0

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2008	Number of pupils in Y2	2
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of key stage 1 was fewer than five, summary information is not included.		

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2008	Number of pupils in Y6	6
As the number of pupils eligible for assessment at the end of key stage 1 was greater than four but fewer than 10, overall performance indicators only are included		

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school:	33%	In Wales:	76%

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

The inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors who spent a total of five inspector-days in school. A peer assessor was not appointed to the inspection.

Before the inspection:

- The school produced a self-evaluation report.
- Separate meetings were held with the head teacher, members of staff, governors and parents.
- Fifteen questionnaire responses from parents were analysed.
- All documentation made available by the school was examined.
- A pre-inspection commentary outlining preliminary views from the inspection team was shared and discussed with the school.

During the inspection:

- Pupils were observed several times throughout the school day.
- Six lessons or part lessons were observed covering both classes.
- Inspectors had formal and informal conversation with pupils about school life and listened to several reading.
- Inspectors had formal and informal conversations with members of staff regarding different aspects of the school.
- Registration sessions and assemblies were observed.
- Samples of pupils' work from both classes were examined.
- Attendance and budget data, pupils' records and other evidence made available by the school were examined.
- The acting head teacher was the school's nominee and was present when inspectors held meetings.

After the inspection:

- Findings were shared with the school staff and the governing body in separate meetings.
- The school received a near final draft of the report for comment and response before final publication.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Glyn Gaskill Registered Inspector	Context. Summary and Recommendations. Key Question 5 and 6. Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2 and 4.
Mrs Lowri Evans Team Inspector	Key Question 7. Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2 and 3. Provision for children under the age of five Bilingualism.
Mr Kerry Jones Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 and 4.
Mrs Tracy O'Hare School's nominee	Liaising between the inspection team and the school. Provision of information.

The contractor was:

Evenlode Education Ltd
Little Garth
St John's Close
Hawarden
Flintshire
CH5 3QJ

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, head teacher, members of staff, parents, other members of the community and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.