



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ysgol Melyd
Ffordd Pennant
Meliden
Prestatyn
LL19 8PE**

Date of inspection: 8 - 10 February 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:

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

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

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Context

Ysgol Melyd is situated in the village of Meliden near Prestatyn on the North Wales coast and is maintained by Denbighshire County Council. It provides education for pupils between three and eleven years of age. The catchment area is considered to be disadvantaged and there are high levels of unemployment. All pupils come from English-speaking homes.

There are currently 147 pupils on roll including 15 who attend the nursery in the mornings. Approximately 36 % of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This figure is significantly higher than the local and national averages and has increased in the last three years. Base line indications show that attainment on entry to the school is below national and local averages. Sixty pupils (43%) are identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) including five who have a statement of ALN. There are four pupils who are being 'looked-after' (LAC) by the local authority (LA). No pupils received fixed-term exclusions in the last year.

Since September 2004 The Language Resourced Provision has been sited at the school. This caters for the needs of children in KS1 with specific, severe speech and /or language disorders. The children integrate with the rest of the school for various school activities on a daily basis.

The headteacher has been in post since January 1998. The school was last inspected in 2005.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Melyd is £4,568, which compares with a maximum of £18,610 and a minimum of £2,626 for primary schools in Denbighshire. The school has the 15th highest budget per pupil out of the 53 primary schools in Denbighshire.

Summary

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

Current performance

The school has many strengths including several which are sector leading. These include:

- the outstanding achievement and progress made by pupils;
- the excellent quality of care, support and guidance which leads to very high standards of pupils' wellbeing;
- the highly effective intervention strategies for vulnerable pupils and the excellent provision made for pupils with speech and language difficulties;
- the outstanding leadership of the headteacher; and the way in which support staff are valued, trained and deployed; and
- the very strong partnerships, particularly with parents and the community.

Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because of:

- the exceptional progress made since the last inspection;
- the quality of leadership at all levels;
- the school's very good understanding of the needs of all its pupils; and
- the highly effective professional learning community within the school and beyond.

Recommendations

In order to improve further the school should:

R1 Strengthen the development of pupils' writing skills, and

R2 Further develop pupils' bilingual skills.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The school will be invited to prepare a written case study for Estyn describing the excellent practice identified by the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Excellent
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Standards: Excellent

The school's performance against the main indicators over the past three years compares exceptionally well with schools in similar circumstances and pupils' prior attainment. The skills of many pupils who begin in the school are below those which are expected. Comparative indicators show that most pupils achieve very well and make greater progress than pupils in similar schools.

Statutory teacher assessments in 2010 indicate that 87.5% per cent of pupils in key stage 1 achieved the core subject indicator (CSI) i.e. the expected level 2 in the three subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school compares exceptionally well to its family (i.e. schools which face similar challenges) for pupils achieving the expected level 2. In 2010 the school was the highest performer in the family in all three subjects. When compared with similar schools, which have a similar number of pupils entitled to receive free school meals (FSM), performance in all three subjects is in the top 25% in Wales. In the same year in key stage 2 (KS2), 73.7% of pupils attained the CSI at level 4 or above. Its performance compares very favourably to its family. When compared with schools, which have a similar number of FSM, it is in the top 50% in English and mathematics and in the top 25% for science.

Consideration of the data over time shows significant and continued improvement in KS1 in all 3 subjects since 2006. This rate of improvement is greater than that for the family, LA and nationally. When compared with schools which have a similar number of pupils entitled to receive FSM, pupil attainment in KS1 in English and mathematics is in the top 25% in two of the past three years. Attainment in KS2, apart from a slight dip in English and mathematics in 2010, is consistently in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales.

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The number of pupils attaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and science in both key stages compares favourably with family averages.

Overall the performance of girls is better than boys. In both key stages the difference reflects the national picture.

Vulnerable pupils make very good progress in terms of behaviour, confidence and achievement. This is a particular strength of the school. All pupils with ALN achieve very well against personal targets and make significant progress relative to their ability, interests and previous attainment. Pupils with speech and language difficulties in the resource provision make excellent progress. Most pupils entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with their ability.

Most pupils listen well and speak confidently in different situations. Within the wide range of pupils' abilities, most read competently. This enables them to access information at appropriate levels of understanding and use it to improve their learning in a variety of subjects. Throughout the school the majority of pupils make effective use of their writing skills for different purposes and in different styles, with increasing confidence. However, few pupils write at length in subjects across the curriculum and a minority demonstrate an insecure grasp of syntax and spelling patterns.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they enjoy their lessons. They are well motivated, engaged and eager to learn. They respond positively to all staff. Almost all concentrate well and persevere with their tasks and activities. They work well independently or in groups and teams. This helps them to assess their own and others' work more effectively.

Considering their linguistic background, the majority of pupils make good progress in gaining Welsh oral skills. Their ability to read and write in Welsh is less well developed. Most pupils understand and respond well to a range of questions and instructions in class; however, they rarely use Welsh around the school. Pupils' awareness of Welsh geography, history and culture is good.

Wellbeing: Excellent

The significant development pupil progress and wellbeing during their time at Ysgol Melyd is an outstanding strength of the school. Nearly all pupils have positive and realistic attitudes to adopting healthy lifestyles, including taking regular exercise and eating healthy foods.

All pupils feel valued and this experience impacts very strongly on the standards they achieve. All pupils, including those in the resource unit, play a full and active part in school life. This helps develop the strong sense of inclusion and belonging that is evident in the school. Almost all pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They have great confidence in adults and value the care, support and guidance given by them.

Pupils are courteous, polite and well-mannered. Nearly all are respectful and their behaviour is good. These attributes are reflected in their positive and enthusiastic attitude to learning.

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The School Council confirms that their suggestions are taken seriously and believe that they have a meaningful contribution to improving pupils' day to day life in school. Pupils' average percentage attendance over the last three years has improved and is consistently in the top 25% of similar schools. The punctuality of nearly all pupils is good.

Pupils' problem solving and thinking skills are very well established throughout the school. Older pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the world of work. This, together with their contribution to community events, ensures that they are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning and for life and work outside school.

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

Learning experiences are excellent. The school offers very stimulating opportunities for learning within and beyond the school. The school meets the needs of pupils very well and this leads to high standards. Teachers collaborate very well to plan flexible, responsive and innovative programmes. The curriculum builds systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills as pupils move from foundation to KS2. An outstanding range of intervention strategies are provided to meet the needs of targeted pupils. These contribute significantly to their understanding and enjoyment of learning.

The school plans exceptionally well for the development of pupil's communication, numeracy and information communications technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum. These plans are embedded very well into the learning experiences of all pupils and are particularly well matched to the needs of groups and individuals. The provision for these skills is well coordinated to ensure that there is coherence in pupils' experiences across the curriculum.

The extensive range of opportunities provided and the comprehensive facilities available enable pupils to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of sustainability-related issues and helps develop their understanding of the wider world.

Current arrangements for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills do not ensure progression as pupils move through the school.

Teaching: Excellent

The quality of teaching is excellent. All staff are enthusiastic and have very high expectations of pupils who are encouraged and motivated to reach their potential. Very effective teaching methods and strategies are used to match the learning needs of pupils in all classes. The exceptional support provided by the numerous classroom support assistants makes an invaluable contribution to the learning of targeted

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groups of pupils. This has a very positive effect on the standards they achieve. Clear learning objectives and success criteria are used very effectively across the school. Lessons are stimulating and ensure the active engagement of almost all pupils

The school's assessment procedures are excellent. The school's system for tracking pupils is rigorous, detailed and applied very effectively across the school. This ensures that pupils of all abilities are set realistic and meaningful targets. Assessment for learning strategies across the school are very well developed. This enables pupils to assess their own and others' work. Good quality feedback is provided for pupils including clear direction as to what they need to do to improve their work. Detailed annual reports and parents' evenings ensure that parents are fully informed about their child's progress. They are clear and informative and allow pupils and parents to contribute to their content.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Highly effective arrangements are in place to support pupils' wellbeing and healthy lifestyles. This is an extremely caring school, particularly in the way it matches learning opportunities to the individual needs of each pupil. The extensive and varied range of learning experiences provided, including pupil visits and visitors to the school, contribute very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and world-wide cultural development.

The school's liaison arrangements with an extensive and comprehensive range of external agencies and support services are very effective. The comprehensive transition arrangements provide a very effective path for pupils moving up to the high school.

The school's personal, health and social education (PSHE) programme contributes very positively to the health and wellbeing of pupils. Procedures for monitoring and prompt follow up of unexplained absences and lateness are embedded and very effective.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The school makes excellent provision for pupils with additional needs. Very effective procedures are in place to identify individual needs early and accurately. Clearly targeted support for groups of vulnerable pupils has resulted in significant improvement in terms of behaviour, confidence and achievement. The specialist provision across the school for pupils with speech and language difficulties is at the forefront of excellent practice in Wales.

Learning environment: Excellent

The excellent, caring and inclusive ethos is strength of the school. Parents, staff and pupils all comment very favourably on the strong sense of care, inclusion and belonging that exists in the school. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. This promotes effective equality of access and opportunity. The school offers a safe and welcoming environment which promotes very successfully pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff successfully

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encourage pupils to challenge stereotypes and to celebrate differences. Pupils say that adults deal quickly and effectively with any instances of inappropriate behaviour.

Highly effective use is made of the good range of available teaching and learning resources. The school provides sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. The accommodation is of a very good standard. The extensive, extremely well equipped grounds are well maintained and provide exceptional facilities for teaching and learning.

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

The quality of leadership at the school is excellent. The head teacher and assistant head teacher work closely together to create a very positive whole-school ethos, where team working is encouraged and valued. There is a clear vision and commitment to improve outcomes and provide all pupils with the best opportunities for learning. High expectations are communicated very effectively to all members of staff and the school sets clear and challenging targets for all pupils.

Job descriptions are clear and members of staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Regular staff meetings provide very good opportunities for all to discuss progress, acquire new skills and to reflect on and share good practice.

The school is very effective in addressing local and national priorities. Careful consideration is given to the School Effectiveness Framework and its philosophy is already evident in the school. The Foundation Phase has been successfully implemented as have revisions to the curriculum at KS2.

The Governing Body (*GB*) is very well informed and effectively contributes to the strategic direction of the school. Governors are developing a good understanding of how the school is performing through the use of data and reports by members of staff. Their knowledge of what the school does to support pupils with a range of different needs is good. Their role as 'critical friends' is very well developed.

Improving quality: Excellent

The process of self-evaluation and development planning is excellent. There is a clear whole-school approach to self-evaluation which draws on regular quality assurance procedures. It involves thorough evaluation and monitoring of data with careful consideration of trends and progress over time. Other successful monitoring activities include, lesson observations, detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils, parents and other interested parties. Pupils' views are sought through the school councils and are seriously considered and respected and as a result pupils are developing confidence in presenting ideas and influencing changes. A self-critical and supportive culture is very well established to improve provision and performance.

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These approaches result in the school having a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development.

Priorities in the school development plan (SDP) are agreed following careful audits and analysis of available information. The link between the self-evaluation process, priorities in the school development (SDP) and pupil targets is very clear. The GB and head teacher provide good resources to support priorities in teaching and learning. Progress is regularly and effectively monitored and evaluated.

The highly effective professional learning community within the school and beyond enables staff to develop and share their professional knowledge purposefully and successfully. This has a significant impact on quality and standards.

The school has addressed all the recommendations from the last inspection and has made excellent progress in improving outcomes.

Partnership working: Excellent

The school has an excellent range of partnerships, which make a significant contribution to pupils' learning experiences and wellbeing. It has established exceptionally good links with parents, individuals and organisations in the local community. There are good partnerships within the local family of schools and the nearby high school. The moderating pupils' work in English and mathematics provides a better understanding amongst teachers of assessment methods and standards of achievement. These they use to good effect. There are good links with the local playgroup and transfer to the nursery class is effective. Links with various charities and agencies promote the wellbeing of pupils well. The extensive, established links with external agencies significantly help improve pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing.

Resource management: Excellent

Resource management is excellent. All teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum very effectively. An excellent feature of this school is the way in which support staff are valued, trained and deployed very effectively to meet the needs of specific needs of pupils. Throughout the school there is a good range of quality resources that are used very effectively to support teaching and learning. Very good use is made of all available space.

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

The link between priorities for improvement and spending is clear. There is a robust and efficient management of the school's budget. The substantial additional funding the school acquires beyond its normal budget is used to very good effect to enhance provision and improve pupil outcomes. In view of this the standards that nearly all pupils achieve and the excellent teaching and support for pupils the school gives very good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fifty parent questionnaires were returned and all expressed the view that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the school. All agree their children like school, feel safe and settle in well. All parents believe that their children are making good progress at the school. They say that staff expect the children to work hard and to do their best. Almost all parents say that children behave well in school and that all are treated fairly and with respect. Almost all parents also say that children receive appropriate support in relation to any particular individual needs. Most parents believe that their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school. Almost all feel they are well-informed about their child's progress and that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. Almost all parents who expressed an opinion believe the school is well or very well run.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Sixty-nine pupils in KS2 completed the questionnaire. 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. Most 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. The majority of 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
Mr Andrew Jones	Peer Inspector
Mrs Lowri Evans	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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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