



*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 Emmanuel  
Victoria Road  
Rhyl  
Denbighshire  
LL18 2EG**

**Date of inspection: October 2010**

**by**

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



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Context

Ysgol Emmanuel is situated in the coastal town of Rhyl. The school serves a mixture of private and rented homes. It admits children to the nursery from three years of age. The entry of children into the nursery is controlled and administered by Denbighshire County Council (the local authority).

The school opened in around 1930 with an extension to Foundation Phase accommodation in 2007. The school building and teaching areas are surrounded by a playground and well-kept fields, including a garden, a forest school area and an adventure trail.

There are 406 full-time pupils on roll and a further 61 children attending the nursery on a part time basis. The school is organised into 15 classes including one nursery class. There are two classes for each year group from the reception year to Year 6. In addition, resource provision is provided for 12 pupils in key stage 2. The classes are taught by 19 full-time teachers and 24 learning support assistants.

The school describes the area it serves as being mainly socially and economically disadvantaged. Approximately 49% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is significantly higher than the local and national averages and has increased slightly in the last three years. Currently, there are six pupils who are being 'looked-after' (LAC) by the local authority.

English is the home language for most pupils. There are currently 21 pupils receiving support for English as an additional language. There are no pupils who use Welsh as a first language.

Base line indications show that attainment on entry to the school is below national and local averages. Approximately 32% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) and 13 pupils receive a statement of ALN. Two pupils received fixed term exclusions in the last year.

The school has achieved the Investors in People Award, Healthy Schools Level 3, the Basic Skills Quality Standard, the International Schools Award, the Eco-Schools Gold Award, and the British Educational, Communications and Technology Award (BECTA). Ysgol Emmanuel is a pilot school for the Foundation Phase.

The headteacher has been in post since 2002. Since the last inspection in 2004, there have been changes to the management structure and senior leadership of the school.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Emmanuel is £3,333, which compares with a maximum of £18,610 and a minimum of £2,626 for primary schools in Denbighshire. The school has the 44th highest budget per pupil out of the 53 primary schools in Denbighshire.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### Current performance

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

- the outstanding standards and progress achieved by pupils;
- the very high standards of pupils' wellbeing;
- the very strong partnerships, particularly with parents and the community, which impact greatly on standards;
- the excellent quality of care, support and guidance; and
- the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors.

### Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because of:

- the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher;
- the exceptional progress that the school has made since the last inspection, especially in the last three years; and
- the highly effective management of resources to ensure priorities are met.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Strengthen the development of pupils' writing skills.
- R2 Further develop the implementation of assessment for learning strategies in all classes.

### **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**

### **Standards: Excellent**

Many pupils make significant progress, achieve exceptionally well and attain high standards whilst in Ysgol Emmanuel. Many comparative indicators show that they make greater progress than pupils at similar schools.

Many pupils attain very well in their end of key stage 2 assessments. In 2010, the school compares exceptionally well to its family (i.e. schools which face similar challenges) for pupils achieving the expected level 4. For the core subject indicator, in English and science it ranks first and is second for mathematics. The school also compares very well to the family for pupils who achieved the higher level 5.

When compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals (FSM), attainment in key stage 1 for 2008-2009 (the last available information) placed the school in the top 25% of the group. Key stage 2 attainment has improved significantly since 2007, and for the last three years the school has been well inside in the top 25% of similar schools for all core subjects other than for English in 2008 when it was within the top 50%.

For pupils at the expected level 4, girls perform better than boys in end of key stage 2 assessments in 2010 other than in science. However, for pupils at the higher level 5 in key stage 2, girls do far better than boys in all core subjects and the core subject indicator.

In the nursery class, children make very good progress, settling quickly into school routines and becoming increasingly confident learners. Many pupils make very significant progress, especially in speaking and listening, while in the school. They enter school with skills that are well below those which are normally expected, but by the time pupils move to secondary education many attain highly, recall previous learning well and use and apply their skills effectively in a range of situations. This equips pupils very well for the next stage of their learning.

Almost all pupils with ALN, in need of support for English as an additional language (EAL) or 'looked-after' by the local authority make at least the expected progress for their age. This is a particular strength of the school.

Many pupils read well. This enables them to access information at appropriate levels of understanding and use this to improve their learning. Many pupils use numeracy well in a range of situations. Pupils' use of information and communications technology (ICT) is very accomplished in a wide range of situations. Younger pupils, for example, use it to research maps, make short video recording of work in lessons or practise phonics. Older pupils show high levels of skill in accessing information from the internet and in producing science presentations using PowerPoint. Co-operation and teamwork are strong features of many lessons. Many pupils do not produce enough extended pieces of writing.

Pupils make good progress in their ability to understand and follow basic instructions in Welsh. They display very positive attitudes to Welsh and are eager to use the Welsh they have learnt, both in and beyond the classroom. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils convey personal information with confidence. Many pupils are able to write dialogues but only a few have a sound grasp of individual sentence patterns in their written work. This limits further progress.

**Wellbeing: Excellent**

Pupils are proud to be members of Ysgol Emmanuel and thrive during their time there. The significant development and progress of their wellbeing is an outstanding strength of the school.

Most pupils are highly engaged and motivated and are keen to learn. They enjoy school, work hard and show pride in their work. They feel that the school values them and this experience impacts very strongly on the standards they achieve.

Older pupils compete to take on a variety of extra responsibilities such as head boy, head girl, house captain or playground helper. They complete their duties with self-assurance and maturity. 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. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school, with most pupils showing great care and kindness towards others. Pupils are courteous, polite and well-mannered. They speak confidently to adults. Most pupils have a secure understanding of how to follow a healthy lifestyle and many take a very active part in the outstanding range of extra activities on offer to them. A good feature of pupils' development is their ability to share, take turns, work co-operatively in groups and show appropriate behaviour when facing personal challenges.

Pupils are very well represented by their school council. They have been responsible for many developments, including improvements to the lunchtime menu and playground facilities, the development of a sensory garden, and a mini general election. Many pupils take part in community activities.

Attendance is improving. Figures are now around average for all schools in Wales and in the best performing 50% of similar schools. Most pupils are punctual.

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

Teachers plan well together to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The curriculum builds systematically on pupils' existing skills, knowledge and understanding to make learning purposeful and relevant. The wide variety of learning experiences makes effective use of the resources available and of the local community. For example, pupils make numerous visits to Rhyl and the surrounding

area that result in a good understanding of their local community and issues such as regeneration. Residential visits are used well to enhance the taught curriculum. Ysgol Emmanuel has developed effective processes to smooth the transfer of pupils from the Foundation Phase to key stage 2. This includes sharing staff, adapting planning and teaching and creating an outdoor area for Year 3 pupils. Provision for skills is well-established for numeracy, reading and ICT, although less well-developed for writing.

Pupils benefit from taking part in withdrawal groups for learning support programmes such as 'catch-up' or speech therapy. All these play a significant part in raising standards. Placing pupils in classes with pupils of similar abilities in key stage 2 is effective.

The school has been very successful in developing Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). There is a wide range of out-of-school clubs and these are well-attended. The school identifies children with particular talents and encourages them to join appropriate clubs in the community.

Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to hear the Welsh language. There is extensive use of Welsh on signs, notices and displays. The school is working successfully to promote Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and a Welsh identity amongst the pupils.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teaching is good or better in many lessons. It is particularly strong in the resource unit and nursery class. Where teaching is most effective, staff motivate, challenge, and engage pupils and have high expectations of them. Staff set clear learning objectives and lessons have pace and structure. They use questioning effectively to support pupils and successfully use a wide range of resources, including technology. Support staff are clear about what they have to do and are well-prepared. There are excellent pupil/teacher relationships and children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are sensitively managed by all staff. These make a significant contribution to improving standards.

There are very good moderation and standardisation processes to ensure consistency of assessment of learning. The school tracks pupil progress and wellbeing exceptionally well and this enables the school to make effective provision for them. Staff feedback to pupils is not consistent and so pupils are not always sure of what they need to do to improve their work.

Parents and carers are kept well-informed about their children's achievements and progress.

### **Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

The care, support and guidance given to pupils is outstanding. It enables pupils to flourish and makes a significant contribution to their progress. Staff and pupils have high respect for each other and all staff manage behaviour very calmly and effectively.

The school has a wide range of very effective initiatives to promote pupils' health and wellbeing and their understanding of related issues. These are promoted in the curriculum and through attractive displays throughout the school. Very successful anti-bullying weeks have raised the awareness of staff and pupils about this issue. Initiatives such as the walking bus and the appointment of a parent liaison officer have had a significant impact on improving attendance levels.

Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their understanding of social and cultural issues. Whole-school assemblies provide very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development through opportunities for reflection and worship. The general ethos of the school and the quality of relationships significantly enhance pupils' moral development, good behaviour and honesty and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions.

The school has very successful links with Welsh Assembly Government initiatives such as 'Flying Start' and 'Communities First' which support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The support provided by the 'Seasons group' for pupils with emotional needs, such as coping with bereavement, is a notable feature.

The support for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding and is a further strength of the school. Successful early intervention schemes, and the attention and care with which personalised support programmes are prepared and delivered, are excellent. They enable these pupils to make significant progress. Arrangements for the use and regular review of individual education plans are very effective. Pupils' progress against their individual targets is monitored regularly and parents are kept fully informed. Pupils with special educational needs integrate extremely well into mainstream classes. The school has appropriately identified more able and talented pupils and provides suitable extension activities to meet their needs.

Exceedingly strong links exist with a range of multi-disciplinary agencies such as the visiting speech and language teachers. The community police officer and school nurse contribute successfully support provision for sex and relationships education and education about substance misuse.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding and fully meets safeguarding regulations.

### **Learning environment: Excellent**

The school has a calm and welcoming ethos that provides pupils with a very safe and supportive learning environment. Parents, staff and pupils all comment very favourably on the strong sense of care, inclusion and belonging that exists in the school, whatever the pupil's background. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and participate fully in the life of the school, whatever their needs or circumstances. There are very effective arrangements for ensuring that pupils with disabilities do not receive less favourable treatment within the school. Staff deal quickly and effectively with any instances of unsuitable behaviour.

Accommodation is of a very high quality, is well-maintained and provides an atmosphere that promotes successful learning. Quiet areas in each classroom, and the sensory garden, are used well by pupils to reflect and manage their actions and

behaviour. These make a significant contribution to pupils' wellbeing. The outside areas are maintained to a very high standard. The forest school area provides a valuable teaching resource. Pupils take pride in and look after their school.

Full use is made of plentiful and wide ranging resources to enhance pupils' learning experiences.

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

The headteacher and deputy headteacher promote a clear vision and commitment to improve standards and provide pupils with the best opportunities for learning. Together, they provide outstanding leadership for the school. The very effective training and deployment of support staff to raise standards of reading and the robust, meticulous system to track pupils' progress are key examples of their highly effective work.

Throughout the school, staff understand and fulfil their roles well. They have clearly defined responsibilities and work very well as a team. Well-structured performance management arrangements identify suitable professional development opportunities for all staff and contribute very well to raising standards. Middle managers assure quality for their areas of responsibility.

The governing body carries out its duties very effectively. Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the performance of the school and rigorously hold it to account for the standards and quality it achieves. Governors fulfil their legal and regulatory duties.

School initiatives to meet local and national priorities are developing strongly. Staff give a very high priority to tackling social disadvantage and ensuring pupils' wellbeing. The implementation of the Foundation Phase is progressing well. The school has the BECTA quality mark in recognition of its good-quality planning for the development of pupils' ICT skills.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The school has a well-established cycle of self-evaluation involves a wide range of stakeholders and provides staff and governors with an accurate and realistic overview of school performance. Teachers analyse and use assessment data carefully and effectively to judge how well the school performs compared with similar schools and local and national averages. A culture of improvement permeates the school.

Overall, school development planning is effective and supported well through the allocation of resources. The plan includes success criteria but there are few quantifiable targets, which limits the measuring of the effects of improvements on the standards that pupils achieve.

Staff are well supported by continuous professional development and benefit from opportunities to share good practice with others. The very well planned and intensive training programme for support staff provides them with the skills and knowledge to be extremely effective in their role, especially in the support of pupils with ALN. The school's involvement in professional learning communities is at an early stage of development.

The school has addressed all the recommendations from the last inspection and this has led to significant improvements in standards.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The school has an excellent range of partnerships, which contribute very significantly to improving the quality of provision for pupils. Staff have the trust and support of parents, who are very appreciative of the range and quality of support provided to them and their children, and regard the school very highly.

Links with the local playgroup help pupils to settle in to school routines quickly. Sharing of information is successful in the early identification of pupils with ALN. There are extensive links with the secondary school to which many pupils transfer. These links provide a very well planned programme of activities for pupils. Joint moderation and standardisation of end of key stage 2 assessments provides rigour to the process and successfully informs both partners of what pupils can achieve. This and other information shared between the schools supports pupils' smooth transition and effective progress from primary to secondary education. Joint planning and sharing of resources between these schools, for example in art and science, enhances provision for pupils. There are also good links with a range of primary schools and other partners.

There are extensive links with the community and a range of local organisations.

### **Resource management: Excellent**

The school manages its finances very well. Expenditure is carefully prioritised and monitored and the school's priorities are appropriately resourced. Teaching and support staff are deployed very well in order to meet the needs of all pupils. There is effective management of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time. There are plenty of good-quality learning resources and a very high standard of accommodation.

Careful management of the budget has enabled the school to purchase additional accommodation for the benefit of the pupils and community use. The recent appointment of a joint finance manager with Rhyl High School is an innovative measure in the school's independent management of the budget.

In view of the very good use the school makes of its funding and the very high outcomes attained by pupils, the school provides excellent value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Pupil questionnaires**

A minority of pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Almost all feel safe in school and believe that the school deals well with any bullying. Nearly all think that they are well-supported in school, especially having someone to talk to if they are worried or upset. Almost all feel they are doing well at school, believe there are enough resources to enable them to learn well and that homework is of value to them. There is widespread agreement that the school helps pupils to live healthy lifestyles.

A minority of pupils feel that other pupils do not always behave well in class or in the play and lunch intervals.

#### **Parental questionnaires**

A minority of parents completed the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed positive views about the school. Many are pleased with the school and say their children like being there and that they feel their children are safe at school. Most parents think the school is well-run and find staff approachable if they have any questions or concerns. Many feel they are kept well-informed about their children's progress and that their child is well prepared for the next stage of their education. A very few parents feel pupils do not behave well but most do not share this view. A few parents were unsure of the school's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Richard Hawkey	Reporting Inspector
Wendy Young	Team Inspector
Iolo Dafydd	Team Inspector
Peter Duncan Haworth	Lay Inspector
Cheryl Wheldon	Peer Inspector
Alison Matthias- Deputy Head	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

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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