



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

**Ladywell Green Nursery and Infant School
Park Street
Newton
Powys
SY16 1EG**

Date of inspection: February 2011

by

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



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

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

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

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

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

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

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Context

Ladywell Green Nursery and Infant School is situated near the centre of Newtown in Powys. The school shares a large campus with the receiving junior school and a Welsh medium primary school. It serves the surrounding residential area.

There are currently 119 full-time pupils on roll. Children are admitted to the nursery class full time at the beginning of the term in which they reach four years of age. The school is organised into five classes. All pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language. Currently, 24% of children receive free school meals, which is above the national average and twice the local authority average.

The school has identified 36% of children with additional learning needs (ALN). No pupils receive a statement of special educational needs (SEN). There have been no fixed term or permanent exclusions in the last three years.

The school has achieved the Green Flag eco-schools award and the Healthy Schools award.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Ladywell Green Nursery and Infant School is £3,950, which compares with a maximum of £11,812 and a minimum of £2,891 for primary schools in Powys. The school has the 31st highest budget per pupil out of the 101 primary schools in Powys.

The headteacher has been in post since January 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

Although there are some strengths in teaching and learning, care, support and guidance and in partnership working, the school's current performance is judged as adequate because:

- pupils' overall performance in English and mathematics does not compare well with that of other similar schools;
- pupils of higher ability are not achieving as well as they should; and
- there are weaknesses in the school's leadership and management and in planning for improvement.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because:

- although the headteacher has an appropriate understanding of the school's main strengths and areas for development, and the governing body supports the school conscientiously, self-evaluation is currently not focused enough on raising standards; and
- there are inconsistencies in some aspects of planning and approaches to teaching.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1 raise standards in English and mathematics and increase the number of pupils who achieve at the higher level at the end of key stage 1;
- R2 use assessment information more effectively to inform planning and match pupils' work to their learning abilities;
- R3 develop a robust system for monitoring all aspects of school performance and identify key priorities for school improvement planning that focus more clearly on outcomes for pupils;
- R4 ensure that leaders consistently communicate high expectations of the work of staff and of pupils; and
- R5 address the safety concern brought to the attention of the headteacher and the governing body during the inspection.

What happens next?

Ladywell Green Nursery and Infant School will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by Estyn.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Many children enter school with skills below those normally expected for children of their age. Pupils' performance in the core subject indicator, the expected level in English, mathematics and science in key stage 1, has improved by more than eight percentage points over the past four years. However, this performance is below the local authority and Wales average and, when compared to that of similar schools, it has been in the third or fourth quarter for the last four years.

There has been an improvement of more than 10 percentage points in English over the past four years, but the school performs below the family, local authority and Wales average. Performance at level 3 is also below the average for the family, local authority and Wales, and no pupils achieve the higher level in writing. Results in mathematics and science are also lower than average for the family, local authority and Wales.

The performance of boys is lower than that of girls in both English and mathematics, but slightly above that of girls in science.

Pupils with additional learning needs generally make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting point by the end of key stage 1.

The achievement and progress of pupils in lessons is generally good. Most pupils have good recall of previous learning. They work together co-operatively and productively to respond to set tasks and to questions posed by their teachers and other adults.

Nearly all pupils listen well and most speak confidently. The recently adopted whole-school writing strategy ensures that, by the end of the key stage, many pupils now write well at length. They generally apply these skills effectively to tasks across the curriculum. The majority of pupils read competently for their age and many are able to discuss the content of books knowledgeably. However, a significant minority of pupils' reading skills are underdeveloped. These pupils do not use a range of strategies wide enough to help them read unfamiliar words.

Pupils use their numeracy skills effectively to solve practical everyday problems across a range of subjects. However, pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are underdeveloped.

Most pupils make good progress in gaining skills in Welsh language. They generally achieve very good standards in oracy and are making good progress in developing their reading and writing skills.

Wellbeing: Good

The good standard of pupils' wellbeing is a strength of the school.

Nearly all pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are enthusiastic and attentive learners. All pupils behave very well and show respect and concern for others. They are polite and courteous. Pupils have a good understanding of their school rules.

All pupils feel safe in school and know how to seek help with any problems. They have positive attitudes to keeping healthy and understand the importance of exercise.

Most parents and pupils understand the importance of good attendance and there are thorough policies and procedures in place to encourage it. Pupils' attendance rates, at 93.4%, are good when compared to local and national rates.

The school council is well established and pupils have a good understanding of their role. They feel that their suggestions are taken account of and that their decisions make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils benefit from the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Pupils' involvement in a good range of community partnerships has contributed to most pupils having well-developed social and life skills. Pupils' understanding of how well they are doing is developing and a majority understand what their teachers want them to do to improve their work.

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

Pupils have regular opportunities to engage in a wide range of stimulating learning experiences. Teachers plan appropriate activities for pupils according to their age and interests, including specific programmes that match the abilities of pupils with additional learning needs. However, the work does not always challenge the more able pupils enough.

Pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills are built on progressively as they move through the school from Nursery to the end of key stage 1. Activities for developing pupils' communication, numeracy and ICT skills are evident in the curriculum plans but have not yet been developed in enough detail. The recently adopted whole-school approach to the teaching of writing has begun to improve standards. However, there is no whole-school approach to the teaching of reading skills. The organisation of the school day limits the amount of time given to direct teaching of key skills.

The school has a strong Welsh ethos and makes very good provision for Welsh language and the development of pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and heritage. All staff use Welsh regularly in a wide range of learning contexts, which contributes very effectively to the good standards pupils achieve.

The school has good provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The school's eco-committee actively promotes recycling and energy conservation. Forest school learning further promotes pupils' understanding of environmental issues. Links with Uganda give pupils an insight into life there.

Teaching: Adequate

Many teachers provide stimulating activities that match pupils' learning needs effectively and give pupils opportunities to work independently. They use an effective range of teaching approaches and ask thoughtful and challenging questions that develop pupils' thinking skills. Where teaching is judged as adequate, work does not challenge more able pupils and the lessons lack pace and are not well organised.

Most teachers and other adults have good subject knowledge and all use a very effective range of strategies to ensure that pupils are motivated and engaged in learning. Adult support is focused and makes a worthwhile contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

Teachers' assessment records are used effectively to track the progress of individual pupils over time. However, these assessments are not always used to plan appropriate future learning objectives for pupils. In general, teachers' marking is clear and positive and there is a consistency of practice throughout the school. Assessment for learning strategies are at an early stage of development.

Although the school has developed core subject portfolios of moderated pupil work, there are no procedures for moderating and standardising pupils' work in the National Curriculum core subjects with that of other local schools.

Reports to parents are clear and informative. Each term teachers inform parents and carers of the next steps children need to make to ensure that further progress is made. The school communicates well with parents through newsletters and regular meetings.

Care, support and guidance: Good

A strength of the school is the high level of care, support and guidance given to its pupils. Pupils feel valued and cared for within the school's nurturing environment. The Incredible Years programme promotes pupils' respect and consideration for each other very effectively and develops pupils' good understanding of how to explore and express their feelings.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Collective worship contributes very well to pupils' development and effectively builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence through celebrating individual achievements.

Teachers and support staff work closely as a team to reduce barriers to learning and provide effective learning support for pupils. Early diagnosis provides pupils with timely support that is appropriate to their needs. The school collaborates well with other agencies to draw up suitable learning support programmes.

The induction arrangements for pupils starting school and the arrangements for pupils' transition to junior school are thorough. Pupils settle quickly and progress well.

The school has appropriate policies for safeguarding. Inspectors brought a safety issue to the attention of the headteacher and governing body during the inspection.

Learning environment: Adequate

The school is a close community where pupils' learning is nurtured in a calm and caring atmosphere. All pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and take each other's views into account.

Attractive and extensive displays in classrooms and communal areas celebrate pupils' work and achievements. The school uses its spacious accommodation effectively and all internal areas are well maintained.

An appropriate range of resources supports pupils' learning well. However, there are insufficient information technology resources available for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills fully and for staff to use ICT to enhance learning. The school has extensive grounds and two external canopies. However, limited use is made of these high quality resources to enrich the curriculum and promote discovery and independence in pupils' learning.

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

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are committed to the school and contribute positively to creating a happy, calm and purposeful learning environment with high standards of pupil wellbeing. They ensure that staff are valued and feel part of the team. The school is an orderly community that functions smoothly and effectively on a day-to-day basis.

However, school leaders do not consistently set high enough expectations or challenge for pupils to achieve their best. They have not yet developed a clear vision for school improvement that is focused on providing pupils with the best opportunities for learning and raising standards.

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities regarding curriculum development, but are hesitant in responding to them. The distributed leadership roles of middle managers are underdeveloped and do not make enough impact on school improvement. For example, introduction of the Foundation Phase is still at an early stage and not all staff are confident in planning and organising appropriate activities both indoors and outdoors.

The governing body is supportive of the school and carries out its relevant functions conscientiously. The headteacher ensures that governors are well informed about pupils' performance, but they do not challenge the school enough to perform better.

The school meets local and national priorities effectively. For example, it has successfully introduced the Incredible Years programme to ensure pupils' wellbeing and has improved standards in pupils' Welsh language development.

Improving quality: Adequate

Staff and governors use a wide range of appropriate evidence, including analysis of pupils' performance, classroom observations and the views of stakeholders including staff, pupils and parents. There is a systematic and clear plan for reviewing all aspects of the school's work over time. However, the focus of the monitoring activities is not always helpful in securing accurate judgements on the school's performance. As a result, the outcomes of the self-evaluation process do not always effectively inform appropriate priorities for the school improvement plan.

The school improvement plan does not prioritise targets that sufficiently focus on pupil outcomes and will help the school to raise standards. Although the school has made progress in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection, self-evaluation is still underdeveloped.

The school provides staff with good professional development opportunities. Staff have good links with other schools and have appropriate opportunities to make visits and attend training courses. However, their understanding of good practice is not always shared and agreed. For example, there are no agreed whole-school strategies for raising standards of reading.

Partnership working: Good

The school has good links with a range of partners, especially with those agencies that provide support for pupils with additional learning needs and specific medical needs. These partnerships secure good outcomes for pupils' wellbeing.

Parents are well informed and feel welcome in the school. They are encouraged to participate in family learning sessions to learn more about the curriculum. A parent and toddler group operates on the premises and this prepares children well for admission to the Nursery class.

Most pupils transfer to the on-site junior school at the end of Year 2 and there are good arrangements to ensure that they become familiar with their new school and staff.

Visitors are welcomed to the school to observe the Incredible Years programme in action. Staff with expertise deliver training in the programme to a range of other providers.

Staff are developing worthwhile links with the relevant family of schools.

Resource management: Adequate

The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. Teaching assistants support teachers well and are deployed efficiently.

The management of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time is effective. The school identifies and effectively meets the professional development needs of all staff through the performance management system.

Overall, the school is well resourced and provides an attractive environment for learning. However, there are limited information technology resources and the school does not make regular use of the grounds and outdoor canopies to promote outdoor learning.

In view of the standards achieved by most of the pupils and the standard of care, support and guidance provided, the school provides adequate value for money

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Only nine parents completed the questionnaire and ten parents attended the parents' meeting. This represents a limited view of the overall number of parents in the school. Nevertheless, these parents express a great deal of satisfaction with the school and have very positive views about its work.

Parents believe that their children are happy, behave well and are respectful. They state that their children are making good progress and that the school staff are approachable if they have concerns or questions. Parents state that children receive enough additional support with their individual learning needs. They believe that their children are well prepared for moving on to the next school.

Parents feel that they are listened to and know how to make a complaint when necessary.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Lynda Newton	Reporting Inspector
Rosemary Lait	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Wynne Griffiths	Peer Inspector
Mrs Broughall	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (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