



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

**Mount Street Infants
Rhosferig Road
Brecon
Powys
LD3 7NG**

Date of inspection: May 2013

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

Mount Street County Primary Infants School is in the town of Brecon. There are 143 pupils on roll aged between three and seven years. There are seven classes including a specialist centre for children with special educational needs. Ten pupils from the south of Powys attend this centre. The last inspection was in 2007. The headteacher has been in post since 2005.

The school's catchment area has a wide variety of housing. The school states that the majority of pupils come from homes that are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Most pupils live in the town of Brecon and the remainder come from the surrounding areas. A significant number of pupils, around 37%, come from a nearby army base. About half of the school population is transient.

Around 11% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Approximately 37% of pupils have an additional learning need, which is much higher than the national average, although very few have statements of special educational need. A very few pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority. Around 68% of pupils come from White British backgrounds. Other children come from a variety of ethnic groups, the largest of which is Nepalese. Around 24% speak English as an additional language, with Nepali or Chinese as the main home language. No pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language.

The individual school budget per pupil for Mount Street C.P. Infants in 2012-2013 means that the budget is £3,941 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Powys is £8,253 and the minimum is £3,087. Mount Street C.P. Infants is 33rd out of the 99 primary schools in Powys in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

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

Current performance

Mount Street Infant School's current performance is good because:

- almost all pupils make good progress in their learning;
- standards of oracy and reading are high by the end of Foundation Phase;
- most pupils achieve excellent standards in Welsh;
- behaviour is very good;
- the quality of teaching is good;
- the school is a very cohesive community, where children and adults of many different cultures work well together; and
- the learning environment is excellent and is used particularly well.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and senior leaders work well together to ensure a clear vision for the school;
- all staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team;
- self-evaluation is accurate and identifies the right actions for improvement;
- governors act as critical and supportive friends to the school; and
- effective partnership working promotes good levels of wellbeing for all pupils.

Recommendations

- R1 Increase the level of challenge for the most able writers
- R2 Improve attendance so that it is at least in line with that of similar schools
- R3 Refine the consistency of teachers' evaluations of pupils' progress in order to better inform future learning
- R4 Make explicit to additional adults the precise learning focus of activities

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Almost all pupils make good progress from their different starting points, both in lessons and over time. Pupils who speak English as an additional language often make rapid progress and achieve very well. Girls and boys achieve equally well over time, although there are variations in performance between different cohorts. Pupils who attend the specialist centre, as well as potentially vulnerable pupils identified as being at risk of falling behind, make good progress to keep pace with their classmates.

Most pupils speak, listen and read very well. Many pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts fluently. They use their knowledge about the sounds that letters make to work out unfamiliar words confidently. Older pupils predict what might happen in stories. They talk knowledgeably about their favourites authors. They use a wide range of vocabulary and adapt their speech patterns appropriately to talk to adults or their peers. By the end of the Foundation Phase, around half of the pupils achieve higher than expected standards in oracy and around a third in reading.

Fewer pupils achieve such high standards in writing. Nevertheless, many pupils write effectively for different purposes, for example writing potion-making recipes in the forest school. Many pupils use their knowledge of sounds well to construct and write simple words independently. They form their letters correctly and develop a neat style of handwriting. Almost all pupils make good use of their information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy, problem solving and independence skills in a range of contexts. This has a positive impact on their learning and the standards they achieve.

Standards in Welsh are excellent. All children enjoy singing and have a good recall of Welsh songs and nursery rhymes. Nearly all pupils listen attentively and with good understanding. They speak Welsh with developing accuracy and good pronunciation. They enjoy reading in Welsh and the most able read with good expression and understanding. They use a range of simple Welsh sentence patterns confidently and use ICT well in their writing work. Nearly all pupils use their Welsh skills confidently across the curriculum. They have effective Welsh numeracy skills and can add and subtract numbers up to a 100 and identify two and three dimensional shapes accurately. Nearly all Nepali speaking pupils make good progress in learning Welsh as their third or fourth language.

In 2012, pupil outcomes at the expected level in the end of Foundation Phase assessments were below those of similar schools. When compared with that of other schools in the same family the school's performance was above the average.

For more able pupils achieving the higher than expected levels, outcomes were above those for both the family of schools and similar schools.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils show pride and confidence in their work, which they demonstrate at the weekly 'celebration' assembly. Most pupils enjoy their learning very much. They listen to their classmates and teachers attentively. All pupils behave well, both in the playground and in the classroom. They are polite and courteous, and kind to each other. Nearly all pupils work well independently or collaboratively in groups or pairs.

Pupils have a very good understanding of racial harmony. Almost all pupils say they feel safe in school, and their parents agree. The school council and eco council are effective in giving pupils some responsibility and making them feel valued. Adults take good account of pupils' views, for example in deciding which games should take place in different areas of the playground at lunchtimes. Pupils have positive attitudes to healthy living and eating. Many enjoy taking part in playground games and learning outdoors, for instance in the forest school.

Attendance has improved steadily over recent years, as a result of actions taken by the school. Nevertheless, it remains lower than in similar schools. Punctuality is good and pupils respond well to the system of rewards that encourages improved attendance.

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

All teachers provide a good range of stimulating learning experiences for their pupils. They make very effective use of local visits and the outside environment, particularly the forest school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for the older pupils.

Detailed planning ensures that pupils' communication, numeracy and thinking skills develop well. Nearly all teachers integrate ICT skills confidently within their lessons. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to write extended stories. However, on occasions, other opportunities to write at length are constrained by the over use of worksheets. Teachers plan many good opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills, for example in the forest school.

The promotion of the Welsh language, its heritage and culture is a strong feature of school life. All staff use Welsh regularly and effectively throughout the day to develop pupils' Welsh language skills and cultural awareness. Nearly all staff are enthusiastic Welsh learners themselves and are successful Welsh role models for pupils. They develop pupils' Welsh language, literacy and ICT skills well as they progress through the Foundation Phase. All staff use Welsh effectively in mathematical development sessions and as a revision tool during registration; this is an excellent feature and has a very positive impact on standards.

There is good provision for pupils to learn about sustainability. All staff and children are actively involved in reducing, reusing and recycling. The eco committee members monitor enthusiastically how well each class is doing in saving energy. Pupils have a good understanding of global citizenship, for example through their celebrations of Nepalese culture.

Teaching: Good

Most teaching ensures that pupils are well motivated and engaged in a good variety of interesting activities. All teachers conduct well-structured lessons at a good pace, and convey high expectations. Most teachers ask thoughtful and challenging questions. They give pupils appropriate oral feedback on their work and use praise very effectively. They make good use of well-prepared resources, especially in the outdoor environment.

All staff know the pupils well and establish very good relationships with them. Learning support assistants offer good care and support to pupils, especially those with additional learning needs. However, on occasions when they are working with groups of pupils, adults do not receive precise enough guidance about the planned focus of the pupils' learning.

The school has good policies and procedures for assessment, recording and reporting. In the classroom, teachers adapt tasks to match pupils' needs, for example to increase the level of challenge. However, not all teachers differentiate work consistently in their planning to take good account of their evaluations of pupils' learning. In a few classes, teachers' written evaluations of what pupils can do lack focus and precision.

The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress through regular 'open afternoons', parents' consultation evenings and annual reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Comprehensive arrangements support pupils' health, care and wellbeing. The staff team work together very efficiently to promote the positive, inclusive ethos, which permeates classrooms and the playground. The school provides very effectively for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through well-planned lessons, indoor and outdoor activities and daily collective worship. Clearly targeted support for vulnerable pupils has resulted in significant improvements in behaviour, confidence and achievement.

The school has devised successful procedures for the early identification of any pupils with additional learning needs. There are carefully developed plans for supporting pupils with specific needs, particularly those who attend the specialist centre. Parents and teachers review these plans together regularly.

Staff give consistently good care to individual pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils well. They spend time listening to pupils' concerns and act quickly to resolve these. The school engages effectively with a range of appropriate external agencies to support pupils' learning needs and development.

Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and give no cause for concern. There are very good arrangements to ensure the health and safety of all pupils and staff.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school is an exceptionally cohesive, inclusive learning community. Diversity is valued and respected particularly well. Equality of opportunity is clearly evident both in policy and in practice. Pupils from the specialist centre integrate seamlessly into school routines. All pupils can use the mandir, a Hindi prayer space, in addition to daily Christian acts of worship. All groups of pupils receive equal access to all aspects of the school's provision. The school has taken great care to appoint the right staff to support this, for example by addressing a gender imbalance and appointing Nepali speaking learning support assistants. This provision has a very significant impact on pupils' good standards of achievement and wellbeing.

The attractive and stimulating teaching and learning environment includes plentiful, high quality resources, both indoors and outdoors. All classrooms and communal spaces have colourful, exciting and informative displays, which celebrate pupils' work. A purposeful buzz of focused concentration pervades throughout the open plan learning areas. A recent programme of refurbishment has enhanced the secure buildings. Regular 'ground force' days keep the well-used school site in particularly good order. The school makes excellent use of the local and wider area to enhance provision, for example the outdoor learning opportunities in the adjacent woodland, and provides good support for other local schools in developing their outdoor provision.

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

The headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership. The senior management team, staff and governing body have successfully developed a clear, shared vision for the school. The school has well-defined leadership roles and good support systems for staff. Regular senior leadership team meetings, staff meetings and sound performance management processes for all staff contribute successfully to improvements in teaching and learning, for example in mathematical development. All staff work well together, they carry out their roles effectively and know the school's current priorities.

Governors support the school well, under the clear and active leadership of the chair of governors. They undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. They make regular school visits, and undertake learning walks and discussions with co-ordinators. The governors understand how pupils' performance compares with that of other similar schools. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are effective critical friends to the school.

The school pays appropriate attention to addressing local and national priorities. For example, the introduction of guided reading, the purchase of additional factual reading materials to encourage boys to read, new information technology resources and the effective use of the woodland area all contribute to raising standards in the Foundation Phase. The school has also responded very effectively to the local authority's bilingualism initiative.

Improving quality: Good

The school has well-established systems for self-evaluation. It uses a good range of first-hand evidence to make judgements about its provision and standards. This evidence includes a detailed analysis of pupil outcomes, regular observations of teaching staff, scrutiny of pupils' work and gathering the views of governors, parents and pupils.

The outcomes of the thorough self-evaluation processes provide the school with an accurate assessment of its strengths and areas for development. Consequently, the school establishes appropriate priorities for improvement. The school development plan includes a broad range of suitable actions, identifies staff responsible for their delivery and has realistic timescales and clear success criteria. It has a positive impact on provision and standards in the school.

The school has established a number of professional learning communities that have helped to improve standards. For example, a study of the effects of summer birthdays on the literacy outcomes resulted in improved school practice in addressing pupils' needs. All staff collaborate well with other schools in the cluster. This has led to more accurate assessment, standardisation and moderation of pupils' work at the end of the Foundation Phase. The school regularly host visits from staff from other schools to observe good Foundation Phase practice.

Partnership working: Good

The school keeps parents well informed through regular open days and newsletters. The good partnership between the school and the parent teacher association supports pupils well. The school has also developed a close relationship with the Nepalese parents and the local Ghurkha community based in Brecon.

There are effective partnerships between the school and agencies in the community including health, social services and welfare groups. Good community links have a positive impact on the school's provision.

The school has effective working practices, including transfer arrangements between the school and the local junior school, secondary school and special school. These arrangements help to prepare pupils well for the next stage of learning. Links with the local authority are strong in terms of joint planning for pupils' wellbeing.

The school's partnership working with the local cluster of schools is effective in promoting the accurate assessment of pupils' learning.

Resource management: Good

The school manages staffing and financial resources efficiently and effectively to support learning. There are enough suitably qualified and trained teachers and teaching assistants. The school deploys staff well to make the best use of their expertise. There are good arrangements for staff development and for providing preparation, planning and assessment time for teachers. All staff have clear, up-to-date and signed job descriptions.

The headteacher and senior leadership team are involved in the performance management of others. All staff contribute to the process, which identifies and addresses their development needs well. The systems have a positive impact on raising standards.

The school manages its budget competently. It provides appropriate resources to meet the needs and priorities identified in the school development plan. The large school budget surplus is declining over time. The school keeps an appropriate reserve due to pupil number volatility and the transient nature of a large group of pupils whose parents serve with the armed forces.

The school offers good value for money in terms of standards achieved by pupils and its careful use of funds.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

In the end of Foundation Phase teacher assessments in 2012 at outcome 5, the school was placed in the lower 50% for language, literacy and communication skills, for mathematical development and for personal and social skills, wellbeing and cultural diversity when compared to similar schools. However, outcomes were above the average for the family of schools in all three areas of learning, and above the average for Wales in literacy and mathematical development.

At the higher than expected outcome 6, the performance of more able pupils was well above that of other schools in the same family. Outcomes placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools for language, literacy and communication skills and mathematical development and in the higher 50% for personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

Boys performed better than girls in all three areas of learning at outcome 5. At outcome 6, more able boys achieved significantly better than girls in mathematical and personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, but more able girls did better in literacy.

Pupils not entitled to free school meals performed significantly better than pupils who are entitled to free meals.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Parental responses (44 parents completed the questionnaire)

All parents who responded say that:

- pupils behave well and staff expect pupils to do their best;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- there is appropriate support for pupils with additional needs;
- children are encouraged to be healthy, exercise regularly and are safe; and
- they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.

Nearly all parents say that:

- they are satisfied with the school, their child likes school and the school is well run;
- their child settled in quickly when they joined the school;
- their child is making good progress;
- the school helps pupils to mature and to take on responsibility;
- they are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems;
- there is a good range of activities, including trips and visits;
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress, and
- their child is well prepared for their next school.

Most parents agree that homework helps pupils to improve and that the school keeps them well informed about their child's progress.

These responses are generally more positive than responses from parents in primary schools across Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Fiona Arnison	Reporting Inspector
Ann Jones	Team Inspector
Elizabeth Halls	Lay Inspector
Ann Roberts	Peer Inspector
Gill Eales	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

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

Glossary of terms – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language;
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language;
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.