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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School
Gungrog Road
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 7EJ

Date of inspection: March 2011

by

Dr. P. David Ellis

Reporting Inspector

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

Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School was founded in 1875 as a National School and moved into its current premises in the 1950s, which were expanded in 1993 to accommodate more classroom space. It is situated in the market town of Welshpool and is one of three infant schools feeding a dual Welsh/English stream junior school. There are currently 68 full-time equivalent pupils on roll, including 17 who attend the nursery full-time, taught in three classes, namely nursery/reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The school also accommodates a part-time Flying Start pre-school setting for two and three year olds, which was not part of this inspection. The number on roll has steadily declined over recent years.

The catchment area contains a local authority (LA) housing estate and number of more recent housing association properties, as well as a male refuge centre. Nearly all pupils live in the local area, which the school describes as relatively disadvantaged economically. Around 26% are entitled to receive free school meals, which is above the national and LA averages, although the figure fluctuates considerably.

Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities. Approximately 28% on roll are currently identified as requiring special educational needs (SEN) support, which is also above the national and LA averages; none has a statement. No pupils currently come from an ethnic minority background, use Welsh as their first language at home or are looked after by the LA, although two from Poland receive support in English as an additional language.

The school was last inspected in February 2005. There have been relatively few changes since then, although a new teacher was appointed in September 2010 following the retirement of the deputy headteacher, whose post was replaced by a teaching and learning responsibility position.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School is £4169 which compares with a maximum of £11812 and a minimum of £2891 for primary schools in Powys. The school has the 21st highest budget per pupil out of the 101 primary schools in Powys.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is adequate because:

- although most pupils make good value added progress through the school, current results in the core subject indicator (CSI) and in English and mathematics are below the family, LA and Wales averages and in the lowest 25% of similar schools;
- although all pupils are happy in school and well cared for and links with parents are particularly strong, attendance has declined over the last two years and is below local and national averages;
- many aspects of learning and teaching are good, but Foundation Phase practice is underdeveloped beyond the nursery and reception class; and
- planning, assessment for learning strategies, marking procedures and reports to parents are relatively underdeveloped.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- there has been little progress in standards since the last inspection and the CSI indicates a downward trend;
- current leadership and management arrangements are insufficiently robust to ensure future success., due particularly to a number of significant staff changes;
- the governing body (GB) is insufficiently involved in determining the strategic direction of the school; and
- the self-evaluation process is relatively underdeveloped and the impact of current initiatives has yet to be assessed.

Recommendations

In order to improve and move forward, the school needs to:

- R1 raise standards particularly in mathematics and writing ;
- R2 continue to develop Foundation Phase practice across the school;
- R3 raise levels of attendance and ensure registration procedures meet statutory requirements;
- R4 further develop planning procedures, reports to parents and assessment for learning and marking strategies; and
- R5 ensure leadership and management arrangements, including the role of the GB and self-evaluation procedures, are effective and robust.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

The school's results for 2010 at level 2 or above in Key Stage 1 (KS1) are below the family, LA and Wales averages in the CSI and in English and mathematics, but above all three comparators in science. Cohorts are relatively small and all pupils not on the SEN register attained the CSI over the last three years. In English overall and in science at the higher level 3 pupils performed better than the family, LA and Wales, but below all three comparators in mathematics, where no level 3s were attained.

Results over the last four years have remained relatively constant in mathematics and science at level 2 or above, whereas they have fluctuated in English, as well as in science at level 3. In the CSI and mathematics at level 3 there is a downward trend. The 2010 results in KS1 place the school in the lowest 25% of similar schools in the CSI, English and mathematics, but in the highest 50% in science.

All pupils, except for a few on the SEN register, make good value added progress through the school and achieve their predicted levels. There is no evidence of any specific groups underachieving and there are no discernible gender differences in

A report on Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School
March 2011

performance, except at level 3 girls consistently do better in English overall and boys tend to do better in science.

Most pupils listen well and speaking skills overall are adequate. In reading, although results are below the family, LA and Wales averages, there is evidence that standards are improving. However, writing remains relatively underdeveloped, especially among boys.

All pupils engage in a range of practical and problem solving activities and most make steady progress in their information communications technology (ICT) skills, but the majority have less well developed mathematical abilities.

Pupils' Welsh language skills are good overall. Most understand and respond well to a range of basic questions and instructions. They write simple texts with increasing confidence and have good pronunciation. Their knowledge of Welsh culture, however, is not so advanced.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and the importance of exercise. All participate in regular physical development lessons, including swimming every week, and many older ones join in with the range of extra-curricular physical activities on offer. All clean their teeth after lunch each day and feel safe in school.

All pupils are happy in school and nearly all behave well and are polite and courteous to each other and adults. They establish very good relationships with staff.

Although most pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they show interest in their work, engage in task enthusiastically and sustain concentration well, they are not routinely involved in contributing to what or how they learn.

Attendance for the three terms prior to inspection was 90.6%, which is below the LA and national averages and represents a downward trend over the last two years. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and unauthorised absence is low.

Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and participate in decision making and school improvement activities; they play an active part in the life of the school, for example as members of the school council and eco committee. They feel confident that their voice is heard.

Many pupils are involved in community activities, including singing at local festivals and fund raising for local and national charities.

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

A report on Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School
March 2011

Teachers provide a good range of stimulating and enriching learning experiences and make effective use of visits, visitors, special events and the outside environment. There is a good range of community links and extra-curricular activities for older pupils.

Medium and short-term planning is detailed, but long-term planning is still in the process of being updated to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

Key skills are identified in planning and the tracking system. Careful preparation ensures that good progress is made in reading and communication skills and ICT is sufficiently integrated across the curriculum, but there are limited opportunities for extended writing and thinking skills.

Planning and provision for Welsh language development are good. The school has a bilingual policy, which is implemented consistently. Although there is variation between classes, on the whole teachers and support staff use incidental Welsh well. However, not enough attention is given particularly to promoting pupils' knowledge of Welsh artists and authors.

Education for sustainable development is effectively promoted through, for example, recycling, energy conservation, vegetable growing and litter collection activities. The concept of global citizenship is less well developed, but pupils have a growing awareness of other cultures.

Teaching: Adequate

Lessons are well prepared and effectively organised with all resources ready and available. They are appropriately structured with clear introductions and plenary sessions when outcomes can be shared and celebrated, although learning objectives and key skills are not overtly communicated to pupils.

Teachers generally conduct lessons at an appropriate pace and manage behaviour effectively. They convey high expectations and use praise and encouragement well. They ask appropriate and purposeful questions and try to involve all pupils.

Work is differentiated appropriately in certain types of lessons, such as guided reading, but there is less evidence of this in teachers' planning and the work produced.

Foundation Phase practice, involving self-initiated learning, is well embedded in the nursery and reception class, but is underdeveloped in Year 1. Independent and collaborative learning strategies generally are in the early stages of development across the school.

Teachers know their pupils well and establish very good relationships with them. Support staff are effectively deployed and make a major contribution to pupils' learning.

The school has an assessment, recording and reporting policy, which includes guidance on marking and meets statutory requirements.

A report on Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School
March 2011

Pupils' progress is effectively recorded via teachers' own records, an on-line tracking system and pupil profiles. Assessment results are carefully analysed and feed into the school development plan (SDP).

Procedures for self and peer assessment, including target setting and assessment for learning strategies, are at an early stage of development.

Most work is marked, but comments are mainly brief and provide little guidance on how improvements can be made, although feedback is often provided orally.

Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's annual reports with teachers. However, currently these are not sufficiently personalised and do not indicate the way forward or how parents can help their child improve, although brief interim reports, issued in the autumn term, do provide this type of guidance.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school makes good provision for pupils' health and wellbeing and has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, further training and governor responsibilities are in the process of review.

The school operates a breakfast club which is well attended and provides a well-structured, calm and caring start to the day.

The school functions as a Christian community and promotes appropriate behaviour and values through acts of collective worship and lessons, which provide good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is also good provision for the development of personal and social education, especially through the Dina school approach.

All pupils receive appropriate support and guidance when they join the nursery. The school liaises well with specialist agencies, such as health and social services. Other external agencies work closely in partnership with the school to ensure pupils' needs are met.

There are no clear strategies for improving attendance and governors have not established any targets. Although registration is carried out electronically, registers are not called immediately at the start of the school day, as required.

There is early identification of pupils with SEN and monitoring of their progress takes place in conjunction with the Flying Start provision on site. All on the register have individual education plans (IEP), which are clear and regularly monitored and reviewed.

Pupils with SEN are well supported both in class and in withdrawal groups. Parents/carers are kept well informed and are fully involved. However, provision for the more able and talented is not as well developed.

Learning environment: Good

A report on Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School
March 2011

Based on its Christian foundation, the school provides a very caring, supportive and inclusive learning environment that takes full account of the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and recent disability legislation. Policies and procedures promote equal access to the curriculum and all aspects of school life. All incidents relating to bullying or other forms of harassment are dealt with effectively.

Although classrooms vary in size, there is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils on roll. The building is in a reasonable condition, except most windows and wooden frames and fascia boards are in need of paintwork. Internally the learning environment is welcoming with stimulating and vibrant displays. The grounds are extensive and well-maintained and the building and site are secure. Resources for learning, both in the classrooms and outside, are good.

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

The headteacher has led the school successfully for many years and is well respected within the LA and community. She has a regular teaching commitment. However, there has been little marked progress since the last inspection, particularly in relation to standards, and current leadership and management arrangements are insufficiently robust to ensure future success.

Due to the size of the school, there is no senior leadership team as such, but each teacher has a management role; curricular responsibilities are now being allocated to match the Foundation Phase areas of learning. There is good team work between staff, but distributed leadership is in the early stages of development.

Performance management procedures for all teachers are in place, but are being revised due to staff changes. Support staff also have an annual review. Training needs are identified and achievements celebrated.

Most governors are long-serving and supportive. They attend training and many visit the school, take part in various activities and have a designated area of interest. However, they are not always well informed and they are insufficiently involved in determining the strategic direction of the school.

The full GB meets at least once a term and appropriate sub-committees are in place. Due attention is given to national and local priorities, although policies are not reviewed on a rolling programme basis and are not signed or dated. There are a few minor omissions in the GB's annual report to parents.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation process is at present insufficiently robust to impact significantly on pupil achievement and the raising of standards.

The SDP is reviewed annually and has a three-year overview that focuses on appropriate areas of improvement. The school is making increasing use of various

A report on Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School
March 2011

performance indicators and evidence from the LA to identify priorities. However, the use of first hand evidence is underdeveloped; listening to the views of parents and pupils, for example, is relatively new.

Systems for staff to monitor and assess the impact of recent initiatives are at an early stage of development.

There is a healthy culture of collaboration between staff, who reflect on and evaluate their own practice and the areas of learning they are responsible for, although the monitoring of standards and teaching is currently undertaken mainly by the headteacher. Internal and external professional learning communities are being established.

All recommendations from the previous inspection have been appropriately addressed.

Partnership working: Good

Links with parents are particularly strong and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

The school has developed a range of successful strategic partnerships with the LA and statutory and non-statutory services, as well as with the local community. For example, there are close links with the parish church and vicar, who visits the school on a regular basis.

There are good transition arrangements with both the Flying Start setting and the receiving junior school, which enables pupils to be prepared appropriately for the next stage in their education.

The school works closely with other schools in organising and leading training events and a system of moderation and standardisation is in place, which is being further developed within the cluster. Levelled and annotated portfolios of work to meet Foundation Phase requirements are in the initial stage of development.

The school has established good links with the Athrawon Bro, which have a positive impact on standards and teachers' confidence in Welsh.

Resource management: Adequate

The school is currently experiencing a number of significant staff changes after a long period of stability. There is a full complement of teachers and support staff appropriate for the number of pupils registered. They are well qualified and suitably experienced and all are effectively deployed.

Staff are given the opportunity to undertake relevant training, when available, and improve their qualifications linked to the SDP and performance management objectives.

Planning, preparation and assessment time is covered by a music specialist mainly who comes in on a Friday to take classes. Also on a Friday afternoon the

A report on Gungrog Church in Wales Infant and Nursery School
March 2011

headteacher helps out during 'Golden Time'. Teachers report that the school fully complies with the workload agreement.

Resources and facilities are generally well managed and the GB predicts that the school budget will be balanced by the end of the financial year due to the recent staff changes and use of a proportion of current reserves.

In light of the lack of progress, particularly in standards, the school gives adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Only six parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. All responded positively to most of the questions; for example, all are satisfied with the school and think it is well run, consider their child likes school and makes good progress and believe behaviour and teaching are good. They also think that pupils are expected to do their best and receive appropriate support, that homework helps school work and that pupils are treated fairly, feel safe and are encouraged to be healthy. In addition, all consider they are well informed, feel happy to approach the school and understand about making a complaint. One or two parents had concerns about their children settling in initially and moving on to the next school, as well as the range of visits available. Four of the six parents added comments, which were all positive except for a concern about the large intake of nursery children at Easter and security.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Dr. P. David Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Mrs. Eleri Hurley	Team Inspector
Mr. Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector
Mr. J. David Evans	Peer Inspector
Mrs. Margaret Evitts	School Nominee

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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