



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Mount Street C.P. Infants
Rhosferig Road
Brecon
Powys
LD3 7NG**

Date of inspection: January 2020

by

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

About Mount Street C.P. Infants

Mount Street Infants School is in Brecon, in Powys. There are currently 116 pupils aged four to seven on roll, in six classes. One of these classes is a specialist centre for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Nine pupils from Brecon and the surrounding area attend this centre.

The average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is 11%. This is below the national average of 18%. The school identifies approximately 31% of pupils as having additional learning needs, including those in the specialist centre. This is well above the national average of 21%. Around 82% of pupils come from a white British ethnic background. Approximately 14% of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The majority of these pupils speak Nepali as their first language. No pupils speak Welsh at home. Around 19% of pupils come from military service families and start or leave the school at different times during the year.

The headteacher assumed her role in an acting capacity in September 2016. She became the permanent headteacher in March 2017. Until recently, the school was working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to education reform in Wales. The last inspection was in May 2013.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The excellent quality of the school's care, support and guidance for pupils results in outstanding levels of wellbeing. The school has an exceptionally happy family atmosphere where nearly all pupils thrive. It provides an extensive range of imaginative learning experiences, both in class and in the stimulating outdoor environment, which results in nearly all pupils having very positive attitudes to learning and achieving well.

A united team of committed teachers and support staff share the headteacher's enthusiastic and inspiring vision for the school, which has best foundation phase practice at its heart. They work very effectively together for the good of their pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with SEN, make good progress and achieve expected or better outcomes by the end of the foundation phase.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Develop pupils' skill in presenting their work independently, in a variety of ways
- R2 Increase the range of approaches teachers use in whole class sessions in order to ensure that pupils are engaged consistently

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to its excellent practice in key aspects of its provision that results in outstanding levels of wellbeing and very positive attitudes to learning, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve expected or better outcomes by the end of the foundation phase. Pupils with SEN, including those in the specialist centre, make good progress over time towards their individual targets.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well. Most pupils are keen to engage visitors in conversation and express their thoughts clearly. As they move through the school, most pupils speak confidently and at increasing length. They use a widening vocabulary, including subject-specific language related to their studies, such as 'global warming'. Older pupils are becoming confident in speaking to a larger audience. For example, during an assembly, the eco committee gave an interesting presentation about climate change and most pupils projected their voices so that everyone could hear what they had to say. Pupils in the specialist centre, including those with speech and language difficulties, make good progress in their speaking skills. They are comfortable speaking with each other and with staff about their work.

Many pupils' use of Welsh is above expectations for their age. Nearly all pupils develop confident conversational skills, have a good range of vocabulary and use Welsh regularly in informal and formal activities. Many pupils in the specialist centre respond appropriately to basic Welsh phrases when greeting others.

Most pupils make good, and occasionally outstanding, progress in their reading skills. Nearly all pupils enjoy reading books and conducting research using information and communication technology (ICT). For example, younger pupils love to share facts about penguins after reading about them and many pupils in Year 2 are knowledgeable about polar bears following their research online. Pupils of all abilities use a range of strategies successfully to read unfamiliar words, including their knowledge of letters and sounds and their ability to think about the overall meaning of the text. Pupils in the specialist centre read familiar or short words in a text confidently and can explain the main points from a short story they have read.

All pupils write for a wide range of interesting purposes. Younger pupils make good progress from forming individual letters to writing short sentences. They use their phonic knowledge capably to spell words they want to write. Most pupils use their writing skills well to record facts, such as 'Baby penguins come in an egg'. Pupils in the specialist centre make good progress in developing legible handwriting. By the end of Year 2, the handwriting of most pupils is neat and well spaced. More able pupils write extended, well-structured stories using a variety of punctuation. Throughout the school, however, pupils sometimes rely on worksheets too much and therefore do not always write and present their work as independently as they could.

Nearly all pupils enjoy mathematical activities and make good progress in their skills. Most are developing a good understanding of number. They recall addition and subtraction facts well and explain the strategies they have used to solve a problem. Most pupils apply their numeracy skills effectively in their role play activities, such as using a price list to pay for ice creams in the 'café'. In Year 2, pupils begin to learn

multiplication and how to check their answers using division. Pupils in the specialist centre start to add numbers accurately. In the forest school, for example, they add the number of twigs they have collected and sort them into sets.

Nearly all pupils are developing good ICT skills. They use a wide range of ICT resources confidently across all areas of learning. For example, younger pupils move a programmable toy across Antarctica to recreate icebergs and rescue penguins. By Year 2, most pupils develop good typing skills and can change the size and colour of font. They create bar charts of different items the class recycle and pictograms of fruit snacks pupils eat. Nearly all pupils can log onto their own accounts independently. Throughout the school, nearly all pupils use tablets regularly and effectively to take pictures and make videos of their work.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Almost all pupils engage enthusiastically with new and unfamiliar experiences and ideas. For example, they plan the questions they want to find out about a new topic and are highly motivated to complete activities and share their new knowledge. Most pupils have a clear understanding of what to do when they find work difficult and will ask a friend or adult for support. Most want to persevere and complete their work. Nearly all pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about outdoor learning and enjoy using the field at break times and during forest school sessions. They develop their problem solving and concentration skills very well when exploring the natural environment.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and know who to speak to, such as a pupil ambassador or member of staff, if they are upset or in need of support. Pupils show high levels of care and consideration for each other. For example, pupil ambassadors conduct their role conscientiously and give helpful support to their peers. Nearly all pupils understand how to stay safe online. They keep their passwords secret and make posters, displayed in the ICT suite, to share advice about online safety.

Most pupils understand the need to eat and drink healthily and enjoy cookery activities where they experiment with different recipes and try new kinds of food. For example, they make ice cream and sample Nepalese cuisine. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of regular exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and thoroughly enjoy it. During yoga sessions, they achieve a sense of calm and peacefulness and improve their physical control and co-ordination.

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons, in assemblies and when moving around the school. They understand school expectations and follow routines very well. Many pupils show high levels of empathy and understanding of other people's needs. For example, pupils in Year 2 visit a local dementia day centre regularly. They explain how they help to make people feel happy by reading to them and participating in activities with them. Pupils also enjoy celebrating the achievements of others in 'best effort' weekly assemblies.

In the specialist centre, nearly all pupils behave very well, show a positive attitude to learning and are ready to help each other. Most pupils are very eager to participate

and show great enthusiasm when talking about their activities. They have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy, for example when eating fruit at snack times or stretching and moving enthusiastically in fitness activities.

Nearly all pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. They have an exceptional understanding of equality and fairness. For example, nearly all pupils welcome and befriend the many new pupils that join during the year, so that they settle and integrate quickly and happily into their new school. Most pupils develop very good levels of emotional resilience, for example, by maintaining contact with friends who move away from Brecon due to their family's military service commitments.

Nearly all pupils are developing extremely well as ethical, informed citizens with a superb understanding of environmental issues. They have a genuine concern about human impact on the world and act conscientiously to make sustainable changes in their own lives. For example, many pupils talk in depth about the impact of palm oil farming on orang-utans and the impact of global warming on melting ice and the consequent loss of habitats for penguins and polar bears. They developed their own project to raise funds, using highly effective entrepreneurial skills, to sponsor an orang-utan.

Many older pupils take on leadership roles as members of the 'Cryw Cymraeg', the eco committee or as digital leaders. They understand their roles and support the school proactively. For example, the eco committee carry out audits and question staff and pupils about their use of energy. As a result, nearly all pupils switch off lights and are passionate about plastic waste and the importance of recycling. Many are involved in activities such as managing the compost bins in the playground and they take their learning out into the wider community.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Teachers and support staff have a deep understanding of the principles and practice of the foundation phase, particularly the importance of providing stimulating activities where pupils learn independently and in collaboration with their peers. They provide an extensive range of imaginative learning experiences which capture pupils' interest and engagement and offer opportunities for them to apply their speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills purposefully across all areas of learning. An excellent feature of the school's provision over many years is its expert use of the outdoor environment to inspire and motivate pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils' work in the outdoor areas, in the extensive grounds and forest school, has a powerful impact on their wellbeing and attitudes to learning. For example, on seeing a visitor inside the classroom, one pupil hurried in from the outside and begged her to come and see what he was writing with a crystal pen in pretend snow.

In the forest school, adults hang 'prompt' cards in trees to help pupils structure an oral story they are composing about creatures that live in the wood. Pupils' regular work in the outdoors promotes very effectively their exceptional appreciation of the environment and the importance of safeguarding it. Teachers' inventive use of the forest school area gives pupils in the specialist centre valuable opportunities to apply their skills creatively in all areas of learning.

The recent reorganisation of year groups, which resulted in mixed reception and Year 1 classes, has had a positive impact on pupils' social skills. Younger pupils learn from their older peers who, in turn, develop their understanding of the needs of others and how to help them. For example, in the forest school, pupils with more advanced skills help younger pupils to tie knots. Teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of pupils at different stages of development in both mixed and single age classes. They take a flexible approach to planning and allow time for pupils to explore particular passions and interests in some depth.

The provision for Welsh language development is very strong. The environment is rich in Welsh vocabulary and pupils often conduct activities in Welsh. Nearly all classes have bilingual role play areas, such as the 'studio newyddion', where pupils write, perform and film their own weather reports from around the world. The school promotes pupils' awareness of Welsh culture and heritage effectively through visits to local places relevant to topics they are studying, such as a local hotel.

Very good working relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils have a powerful impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and their achievement. The unobtrusive, but effective, management of pupils' behaviour results in a purposeful working atmosphere throughout the school. Sometimes, however, teachers talk for too long in whole class sessions, particularly during introductions, so that there is less opportunity for pupils to be actively involved and a few begin to disengage from the lesson.

Teachers deploy the skills of additional adults very effectively to question pupils, enrich their use of language and extend their learning. For example, while sitting in a large circle in the outdoor classroom, they encourage pupils to reflect thoughtfully on the meaning of kindness and to say positive things to one another as they create a 'friendship snowflake' from sparkly white wool.

Lessons build well on previous learning. Teachers and support staff observe pupils carefully as they work and question them skilfully to gauge their understanding. They share their assessments of pupils' levels of understanding at the end of the lesson and make notes that inform their planning for the next steps in their learning. As a result, most pupils receive a suitable level of support or challenge. In the specialist centre, teachers take pupils' targets into account effectively when planning future lessons.

Teachers give learners helpful oral feedback as they work. Nearly all pupils understand and respond positively to the age-appropriate written feedback teachers give them, using 'pink for think' and 'yellow to glow' coloured pens. This feedback encourages pupils to look back at their work to spot where they went wrong and learn from their mistakes.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school's links with the community are exemplary and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to engage with the wider world. For example, pupils learn about different cultures from their peers and engage in a dementia friendly programme at a local day centre. This helps to develop pupils' empathy for people experiencing memory loss and to develop a strong awareness of the experiences and needs of other people.

The school provides an exceptionally calm, nurturing family atmosphere and an inclusive environment so that nearly all pupils want to come to school and feel happy and safe there. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school listens actively to pupils' ideas about what they would like to learn. It uses these to provide an engaging programme of regular visits from people in the community to boost pupils' learning and wellbeing. For example, a therapy dog comes to support readers and the police liaison officer raises pupils' awareness of how to keep safe. Visits from a local cookery company encourage pupils to try a wider range of healthy food. The school has effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to be active during the school day, both indoors and outside. Regular yoga sessions, physical education lessons and after school clubs, such as rugby and cricket, make a beneficial contribution to pupils' physical strength, co-ordination and sense of wellbeing.

A very strong, sustained feature of the school is the in-depth knowledge that staff have of each pupil's strengths and needs. The school identifies pupils requiring extra help with their learning at an early stage and staff collaborate highly effectively to provide the right support for them. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed provision plans which include measurable and challenging targets. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully and evaluates their achievements regularly, adapting its provision in order to meet their changing needs.

The school reaches out and supports the families of pupils needing additional support very well. The emotional and behavioural support provided for pupils is outstanding and reflects staff knowledge of the needs of individual learners. For example, its understanding and support of pupils who have recently joined the school and need time to settle and adapt to its routines and expectations is very strong.

The specialist centre provides a calm learning environment where the relationship between staff and pupils supports learning very well. Teachers and support staff respond sensitively to pupils' individual needs with understanding and compassion. They make effective use of external support agencies, such as the speech and language service, to provide further help and advice when needed. The centre, in line with the rest of the school, uses detailed electronic systems to track and record pupil progress and attainment. Teachers deliver carefully structured strategies to support pupil progress. The teacher in charge monitors their effectiveness and reviews outcomes with parents. Effective adaptation of provision and resources ensures that most pupils make good progress towards their individual targets.

All members of staff appreciate and celebrate the unique community they serve. The support provided for pupils from military families is exemplary. As a result, nearly all parents feel that the school welcomes both their children, and the wider family, very warmly and helps them become valued members of the school community. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive an extensive range of support that enables them to make very good progress.

A very strong feature of the school's provision is its close and highly effective partnership with parents. It values their contributions and involvement in the life of the school and provides effective lines of communication. For example, through annual discussions between staff and parents, there is clarity around everyone's role in supporting pupils' progress and wellbeing. The school's use of an electronic communication system allows parents to see the activities their children have been engaged in each week and helps celebrate their achievements.

Written reports to parents about their children's progress provide very detailed and personalised information about their achievements and targets to improve in literacy, numeracy and social skills. Nearly all parents feel confident to approach staff and communicate any concerns about their child's wellbeing or progress and receive useful advice to support their children at home.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher leads the school with a passion for the learning and wellbeing of all pupils. Parents, governors and staff share her inspiring vision, which has effective foundation phase practice at its heart, and anticipates the core purposes of the future new curriculum for Wales very well. Staff morale is high and they work very effectively together as a united team to do the best they can for the pupils.

Many teachers take an active leadership role and collaborate with individual governors who take an interest in a specific area of learning, or another aspect of school life. Governors play an active role in the school's self-improvement cycle. For example, they helped to develop and monitor the introduction of a new behaviour management policy.

Teachers share leadership responsibilities, evaluate the school's performance and plan for improvement effectively. All teachers look at pupils' work, review their progress and observe one another's lessons in order to gain an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas to improve. Occasionally, however, the school moves its focus on to new improvement priorities before meeting current ones fully. For example, last year's focus on developing pupils' speaking skills has been successful, but teachers sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to use this skill during whole class sessions.

Leaders in the specialist centre contribute fully to the self-evaluation process. They help to identify relevant areas for improvement, such as a current priority to improve support for pupils with social and emotional difficulties. They share their expertise with colleagues, which help teachers provide more effective individualised support for pupils in their own classes.

Leaders are approachable, so that all members of staff feel confident in communicating their professional development needs to them. For example, a current priority, to strengthen teachers' skills in teaching mathematics, came from members of staff who felt that they would benefit from further training in this area.

The school listens carefully to pupils' opinions and promotes their leadership skills well. For example, pupils independently spotted palm oil in the school's ice cream, so staff sourced alternative brands. The school has sustained its very good work in raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues over many years.

Professional learning opportunities for staff are excellent. Nearly all teachers have visited other countries, such as Finland, Iceland and Romania, to observe best practice in early childhood education. Collaboration with colleagues in other schools, nationally and internationally, results in many positive outcomes. For example, staff have an increased understanding of how to create purposeful opportunities for independent learning and how to maximise the impact of learning outdoors. The school shares its best practice with other schools in the area and beyond.

The school uses the range of grants it receives very effectively. For example, the pupil development grant funds a learning support assistant who runs intervention programmes for eligible pupils. Nearly all these pupils make accelerated progress due to the additional support they receive.

The school works closely with the Supporting Service Children in Education organisation. Its support for children of service families is outstanding. Leaders have spoken at national conferences, developed a toolkit other schools can use to support pupils from military families and received a visit from the first minister of education to observe the school's provision for service children.

The school shares its budget information and funding in a highly transparent manner through the governors' annual report to parents. Leaders are skilful in accessing additional funding from a range of sources, which have a positive impact on the school's provision. For example, they accessed funding from the Ministry of Defence to provide additional support for pupils from service families, particularly those of Nepalese origin, and to build an outdoor classroom.

The indoor school environment is well organised and resourced. There are good ICT resources, including a computer suite, interactive whiteboards and tablets, which pupils use regularly. All classes have outdoor areas that are in constant use. The use of the extensive grounds to enrich pupils' learning and wellbeing is a very strong and sustained feature of the school's provision. They include a coppiced wood, forest school, community gardens, trim trail and a large field which pupils use every break time, whatever the weather. Regular time spent in this high quality natural environment strongly enhances pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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